

A CONNOISSEUR'S GUIDE TO VINTAGE CHAMPAGNE

SAVEUR

Savor a World of Authentic Cuisine

THE ART OF ROASTING

Four classic dishes that bring grandeur to
your holiday table

PAGE 85

HOW TO
CARVE

PAGE 86

Brazil's Spiciest
Cuisine

HOMEMADE
CHRISTMAS
CANDY

PAGE 64



NUMBER 107

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SAVEUR



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COVER

A prime rib of beef, roasted to perfection.

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FEATURES

A NIGHT IN BERLIN

50 For an intimate Christmas Eve dinner, a group of old friends finds inspiration in the bustling markets, venerable delicatessens, and cosmopolitan neighborhoods of a city no longer divided.

BY URSULA HEINZELMANN



64

SWEET TEXAS HOME

64 Homemade candies—lollipops, toffee, peppermint patties, and more—are what Christmas with Mom is all about. BY LIZ PEARSON

FOOD OF THE GODS

72 Flavors of Africa and Portugal mingle in Bahia, on Brazil's northeastern coast, where indigenous ingredients evoke an unmistakable sense of place and eating is, truly, a religious experience. BY MARICEL E. PRESILLA

KING OF THE FEAST

85 Generous, succulent roasts have long reigned supreme at the holiday table, and their enduring appeal begins with the elemental pleasures of cooking and carving. BY MOLLY STEVENS

72



CONTENTS



29



39



94

DEPARTMENTS

12

FIRST We knew the holidays had arrived when the electric carving knife came out.

BY DANA BOWEN

15

SAVEUR FARE Guatemalan tamales; saf-
fron worth traveling for; restaurant-kitchen
secrets revealed; plus Agenda and more.

22

BOOK REVIEW Some of 2007's best
reads, from culinary memoirs to recipe collec-
tions from Spain, India, and cowboy country.

BY THE EDITORS

26

LIST Food-focused charities offer innova-
tive options for giving.

BY LIZ PEARSON

29

CELLAR France's vintage champagnes are
the perfect match for a grand holiday meal.

BY PAUL LUKACS

35

KITCHENWISE In a British Columbia
farm kitchen, thoughtful design supports a cou-
ple's commitment to local, sustainable eating.

BY GEORGIA FREEDMAN

39

REPORTER The legendary, and legendarily
rowdy, brasserie Au Pied de Cochon has been

a Paris nightlife pilgrimage site for 60 years.

BY JAY CHESHES

42

SOURCE Sweet, spiced printen cookies are
one of Germany's Christmas gifts to the world.

BY GRACE YOUNG

47

CLASSIC Variations on latkes, the quint-
essential Hanukkah treat, abound, but it's
hard to improve on a traditional recipe for
these crisp, savory potato pancakes.

BY JOAN NATHAN

94

IN THE SAVEUR KITCHEN Flavorful
bouquets garnis; do-it-yourself roasting rack;
a history of carving; dendê oil; and more.

100

THE PANTRY How to find our favorite
products and materials from this issue.

BY LIZ PEARSON

108

SAVEUR MOMENT At lunchtime, Santa's
beard is just another occupational hazard.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BETTMANN/CORBIS

RECIPES & METHODS

FARE

Tamales Colorados (Guatemalan Tamales with Ancho
Chile Sauce).....16

CELLAR

Lobster Bisque 30

REPORTER

Soupe à l'Oignon (French Onion Soup).....40

CLASSIC

Latkes (Potato Pancakes).....47

BERLIN

Rübchen mit Entenschenkeln Geschmort (Braised Duck Legs
with Rutabagas).....52

Gratinierte Austern auf Sauerkraut (Gratinéed Oysters
with Sauerkraut).....55

Rotkohl (Braised Red Cabbage with Bacon).....58

Rotweingelee mit Schlagsahne (Sweet Red Wine Jelly with
Whipped Cream).....60

TEXAS SWEETS

Pecan Toffee.....66

Peppermint Patties 69

Coconut Candy Bars.....70

Lollipops.....70

BAHIA

Moqueca de Peixe (Fish Stew with Coconut Milk).....75

Quiabada (Braised Beef Stew with Okra and Smoked
Sausage) 77

Cacique's Molho de Pimenta (Bahian Salsa).....80

Salada de Feijão-Fradinho (Black-Eyed Pea Salad).....82

Caipirinha (Cachaça-Lime Cocktail).....83

ROASTS

Crisp Roast Pork.....86

Roasted Herbed Chicken and Vegetables.....89

Prime Rib.....91

Striped Bass with Salsa Verde.....92

FOR AN INDEX OF RECIPES AND METHODS BY CATEGORY, SEE PAGE 99.

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SAVEUR Celebrates Chicago

at The Chopping Block

SAVEUR spent the evening of October tenth celebrating Chicago as "America's new culinary star". From hot dogs to haute cuisine and everything in between, Chicagoans enjoyed cooking demonstrations by the city's top food artisans and met SAVEUR editors and the talented cooks featured in the October issue, including some of the city's celebrity chefs, hot dog masters, soul food purveyors, deep dish pizza makers, Polish butchers, and more. A portion of the evening's proceeds was donated to the Greater Chicago Food Depository.



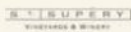
Clockwise from top left: Chef Bruce Sherman of North Pond; SAVEUR editor-in-chief James Oseland and SAVEUR publisher Russ Cherami; Sandie Campo; chef Art Smith of Table Fifty-Two and Allen Brothers executive culinary director JoAnn Witherell; SAVEUR sales director Denise Autorino and Irish Dairy Board Brand communications director Molly O'Loughlin; Larry Pruitt of Izola's.

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SAVEUR



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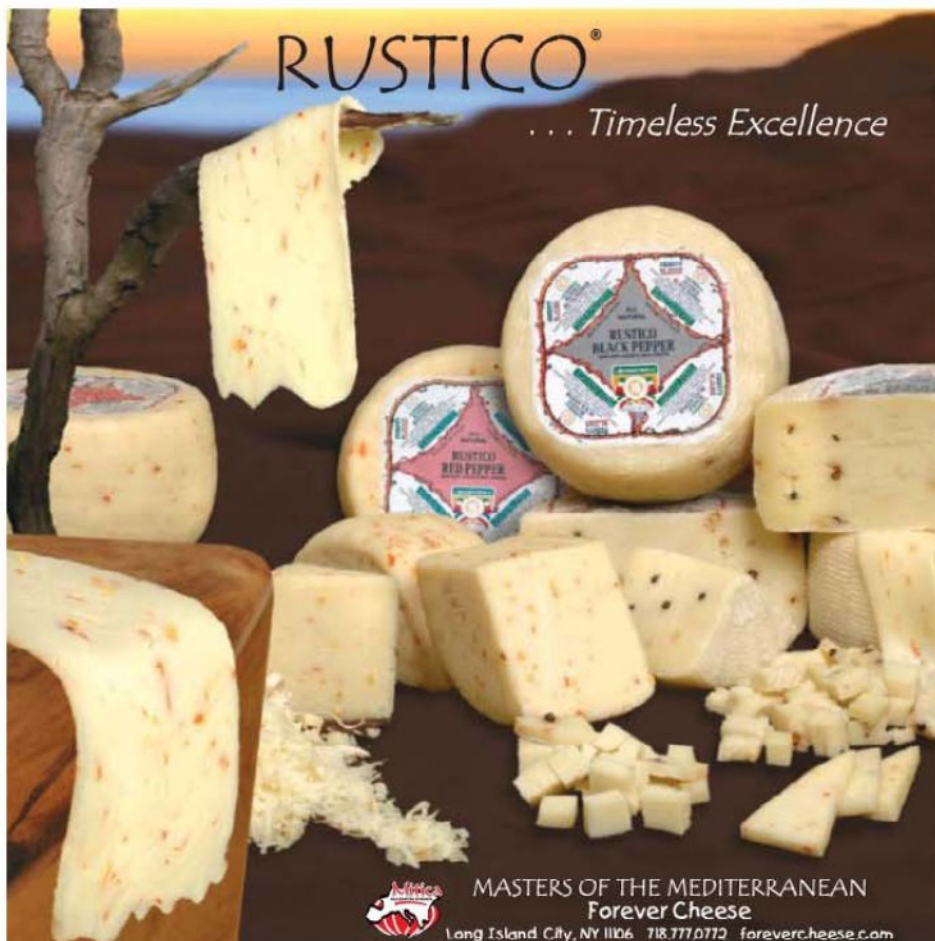
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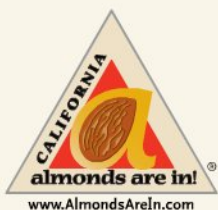
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Available in more forms than any other tree nut and used in countless ways, almonds could be the inspiration behind your next dish. They have an amazing ability to work with a wide range of flavor profiles, from sweet to savory. Whether you roast them, grind them, sprinkle them, or chop them, just make sure that almonds are in.

For more on the inspiring and versatile role of almonds, go to www.AlmondsAreIn.com.

FIRST

Slice of Life

The holiday meal didn't officially begin until Dad wielded his electric knife

THROUGHOUT MY childhood, my parents kept an electric knife, which they'd received as a wedding present, hidden away on a high shelf in their pantry. And just before every Christmas dinner, my father would retrieve it, pulling the sleek-looking machine—an early Sunbeam model, like the one shown on this page—from its original, 1960s-era cardboard package and carefully attach its two gleaming serrated blades. Then he'd plug the thing in and gun its motor. That loud, unmistakable whir, which sounded like that of a miniature chain saw, would send everyone hurrying into the kitchen, where we'd find Dad standing before whatever roast Mom had prepared that year, peeling off perfectly smooth, juicy slices.

I thought about that knife quite a bit as the planning for this year's December issue got under way. Reading Molly Stevens's tribute to centerpiece roasts and the art of cooking them (see "King of the Feast", page 85), I was reminded of how Dad's annual act of electric carving signaled, to my younger self, the special nature of the meal. Of course, there were other clues, too: the cooking and baking that started days earlier; the arrival of friends and family. But all the holiday hubbub seemed to coalesce in that single moment when Dad revved up the knife.

You don't hear much about electric knives anymore—remarkable, considering their onetime popularity. The first ones were introduced by General Electric in the early 1960s, during an era when everything from toothbrushes to can openers was being motorized; by 1965, according to *Time* magazine, 32 companies were making a total of 103 different models.

Many purists have labeled them playthings for gadget hounds and greenhorn carvers. Others have argued that their popularity correlated with the collective disappearance of carving skills on the part of home cooks. But as the culinary historian Darra Goldstein points out in her succinct history of carving (see page 96), the gradual decline of that art may have had to do more with the increasing informality of dining in modern times than with the invention of a new kitchen appliance.

For years, I discounted Dad's electric knife as an outdated fancy he refused to let go of, like his wide-collared shirts and Brut cologne. After I left home, I slowly attempted to master the art of carving using the more traditional knife and fork. But as I spent time in restaurant kitchens, I learned that electric knives weren't as maligned among culinary professionals as I'd thought: restaurant cooks use them all the time for slicing a variety of foods, including flaky pastries and crusty breads (the fast-moving serrated blades create fewer crumbs), as well as delicately layered terrines.

So, in the spirit of the holidays, I recently hunted down a vintage electric knife like Dad's and took it home for a test drive on a capon I'd roasted for Sunday dinner. When my husband heard the thrum of the electric motor and the gnashing of the blades, he rushed in from the dining room and insisted on giving it a try. After deconstructing the bird effortlessly and rendering it into neat, even slices, he flashed a satisfied grin. "Well, if nothing else," he said, "it sure makes carving fun."

—DANA BOWEN, Deputy Editor





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FARE

Sweets, Spices, and Secrets from the World of Food, plus Agenda and More

Inner Beauty

THE BEST CHRISTMAS PRESENTS FROM my Guatemalan grandmother always came wrapped in banana leaves. She would arrive at our home in Los Angeles on Christmas morning wearing a mismatched sweat suit and holding a giant stockpot of freshly steamed tamales colorados. A holiday specialty from her homeland, the tamales took the festive red color for which they're named from a recado, or sauce, of tomatoes and achiote paste (made from the pulp of annatto seeds). Inside each tamale was a pillow of masa (cornmeal) dough, red peppers, seasoned pork, and a lone green olive, which I always reserved

for the last, sublime bite. After Grandma died, in 2003, we realized with dismay that no one had bothered to learn her recipe. Like other Angelinos of Guatemalan descent who had lost their culinary matriarchs, we resorted to ordering our tamales from a local shop that sold them during Christmastime. Alas, they were nowhere near as good as Grandma's, and I resolved to unlock the secrets of real tamales colorados.

That mission led me, last spring, to the front door of Maria and Bartolomé Cay's modest home just outside the old colonial city of Antigua, in southern Guatemala, where I was studying the local cuisine. I'd endured

FARE

RECIPE

Tamales Colorados

(Guatemalan Tamales with Ancho Chile Sauce)

MAKES 10

These banana leaf–wrapped tamales are covered with an outer layer of foil, which ensures that they stay closed when steamed. Alternatively, the foil may be omitted and the tamales tied with kitchen twine. (Parchment paper may be substituted for the banana leaves, as well.) For a source for hard-to-find ingredients, see *THE PANTRY*, page 100.

- 1 cup plus 3 tbsp. canola oil
- 1 1-lb. piece boneless pork shoulder
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 4 plum tomatoes, cored and roughly chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
- 2 ancho chiles, stemmed, seeded, and roughly chopped
- 1 small white onion, roughly chopped
- 1 tsp. distilled white vinegar
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 13 14" x 14" pieces fresh or frozen and thawed banana leaf, trimmed of hard edges, rinsed, and patted dry
- 1 tsp. achiote paste (ground annatto seed and spices); optional
- 2 cups masa harina (corn flour for tamales; preferably Maseca brand)
- 1 cup rice flour
- 1/4 cup capers, rinsed
- 15–20 large pitted green olives
- 1/2 red bell pepper, cored, seeded, and thinly sliced

1. Heat 2 tbsp. oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Season pork with salt; cook, turning occasionally, until browned, 10–12 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool. Cut pork into 3"–4"-long slices about 1/2" thick and set aside.

2. To make the chile sauce: Purée tomatoes, garlic, chiles, onions, and 1/4 cup water in a blender. Heat 1 tbsp. oil in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Slowly add purée, vinegar, sugar, and salt; boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer, stirring occasionally, until thick, about 40 minutes. Set sauce aside.

3. Heat a skillet over medium-high heat. Toast 10 banana leaf pieces in skillet, one at a time, turning once, 20–30 seconds. Transfer to a plate. Alternately layer banana leaves, dull side up, with 14" squares of foil; trim protruding leaves.

4. To make the corn-flour dough: Put achiote paste and 1 quart warm water into a bowl. Mash paste with your fingers to dissolve. Add masa harina, rice flour, remaining oil, and 2 tbsp. salt; whisk. Transfer mixture to a medium pot; cook over medium-high heat, whisking constantly, until dough is very thick and pulls away from sides of pot, 6–8 minutes. Transfer dough to a bowl.

5. To assemble the tamales: Place about 1/2 cup dough into middle of a banana leaf; form dough into a 4" square. Top with 2 pieces pork, 4–5 capers, 1–2 olives, 2 slices bell pepper, and about 2 tbsp. chile sauce. Fold sides of banana leaf over filling to make a snug rectangular package. Repeat process with remaining dough, pork, capers, olives, peppers, and a little chile sauce to make 10 tamales in all. (Reserve remaining chile sauce for another use.)

6. Place a large collapsible steamer inside a deep wide pot; pour in enough water for a depth of 1". Line steamer with the 3 remaining banana leaf pieces. Arrange tamales in steamer, standing them upright. Cover pot; boil. Reduce heat to medium and steam tamales, covered, until firm and cooked through, 45–50 minutes. Unwrap; serve tamales hot or at room temperature.

a bumpy rickshaw ride through the town's cobblestone streets to get there, going on a tip from a housekeeper at the hotel where I was staying. The Cays, she'd told me, have been making and selling

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



"I aspired toward fasting and abstinence. But that alluring roast lamb is too tempting."

—Bushaq (15th-century Persian satirist)

tamales from their kitchen for 70 years. When I explained my mission to the kindly man with salt-and-pepper hair who answered the door, he smiled, introduced himself as Bartolomé Cay, and motioned for me to follow him into the house's modest kitchen.

Cay handed me a huge wooden spoon and told me to stir a cauldron of simmering corn masa. As I did so, he explained his technique. Banana leaves are fine for wrapping the tamales, he said, but in Gua-

temala the leaves of other indigenous trees—including the sturdy mashan and the sibaque—are also used. Cay told me to shut off the heat as soon as the cornmeal thickened, which would indicate it was ready, and then brought out a pot of recado, which he'd made in advance so that the flavors would mingle. Some cooks add pumpkin seeds or tomatillos, he said, but his version was simpler (like my grandmother's), made with just tomatoes, bright achiote paste, and a few other seasonings.

We carried the pots of masa and recado outside to a long table, where Cay, his wife, and their four daughters began assembling tamales, first laying down a leaf—today they were using banana and mashan leaves—then adding some masa, a dollop of the recado, some pork, and a little more recado. (The olive-and-caper studded version, Cay explained, is reserved for holidays.) Finally, they folded the leaf around the masa, tied the tamale with twine, and added it to the pot for steaming. It took a few clumsy attempts before I got the knack of it and my tamales were declared good enough to add to the pot. I heaved a sigh of relief. I'd told everyone back home that I'd be making Guatemalan red tamales this Christmas. And now I knew I could. —Cindy Arora



The author, Cindy Arora (left), learning to fold tamales colorados with Maria Cay at the Cay family's home near Antigua, Guatemala.

FARE

AGENDA

DECEMBER

1-9

SAGRA DEL CINGHIALE

Suvereto, Italy

You can order the prized local cinghiale, or wild boar, at many restaurants in Tuscany, but to go whole hog, visit this town while the locals are celebrating their annual festival devoted to the beast. Shop for sausage, prosciutto, and other cured meats, all made from wild boar, and, on the weekends, sample dishes like tagliatelle with wild boar ragù. Information: 310/820-1898 or 212/245-5618.



DECEMBER

1

THE 11TH ANNUAL JENNINGS CHRISTMAS GUMBO COOK-OFF

Jennings, Louisiana

There are as many varieties of gumbo in Louisiana as there are Creole cooks, and this Christmas festival and cooking contest offers a rare chance to sample many of them for just \$1 per bowl. Seek out the chicken-sausage version from the Cormier brothers, a pair of locally famous chefs who have won for eight years in a row. Information: 337/821-5521.

DECEMBER

1-31

CHRISTKINDLESMÄRIK

Strasbourg, France

Wander the stalls of the oldest known Christmas market in France, and you'll get to eat as you shop for holiday presents. Try local specialties like foie gras de canard, grilled spiced pork sausages, and the region's famous gingerbread, followed by sips of the local vendange tardive, a sweet wine made with late-harvest grapes. Information: www.tourisme-alsace.com.

DECEMBER

4-8

PIG'S EAR BEER AND CIDER FESTIVAL

East End, London

Come thirsty to this annual celebration of "pig's ear"; the phrase is cockney slang for beer. Hosted by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), a British group that supports traditionally made beer and independent brewers, it offers a rare opportunity to sample artisanal suds, from perries (pear ciders) to cask-conditioned ales. Information: www.pigsear.org.uk.



DECEMBER

7

LA GRITERÍA

León and Granada, Nicaragua

During the holiday known as La Gritería, whose name comes from the Spanish word for scream, people roam the streets yelling, "Who causes so much happiness?" The answer is Nicaragua's patron saint, the Virgin Mary, to whom altars are set up outside residents' homes, with offerings of sugarcane (pictured, left) and gofio, a local treat made with corn, cloves, and sugar. Information: 505-254-5191.



DECEMBER

16-24

SIMBANG GABI

The Philippines

For the nine days before Christmas, people all across the Philippines gather in the wee hours of the mornings for these predawn masses. Following each mass, congregants meet outside the churches to eat sweet rice cakes, called bibingka, which are baked between layers of hot coals, topped with sliced eggs or cheese, and served with fresh, grated coconut or hot ginger tea.

DECEMBER / JANUARY

26-1

Anniversary:

1966

KWANZAA

Maulana Karenga, a professor of black studies at California State University at Long Beach, created Kwanzaa in 1966 to celebrate African-Americans' roots. Modeled on ancient African harvest festivals, the holiday culminates in a *karamu*, a feast of indigenous African ingredients, such as yams and okra.

DECEMBER

30

Birthday:

ASA GRIGGS CANDLER

Villa Rica, Georgia

Coca-Cola was a little-known drink sold at Jacob's Pharmacy in Atlanta, Georgia, when, in 1891, Asa Griggs Candler, a local businessman, bought its secret formula for \$2,300. It was Candler, the Coca-Cola Company's founder, who turned the soft drink into a pioneer of modern marketing by emblazoning the logo on tchotchkes like wall clocks and coffee urns.



Nice Threads

"Saffron is very old, very expensive, almost mythical," Jean Marie Thiercelin says, peering at me over his wire-rimmed spectacles. "It has always been adulterated by any means possible." We're surrounded by shelves lined with apothecary jars in Thiercelin's six-year-old spice shop, Goumanyat et Son Royaume, in the Marais district of Paris. He opens a jar and holds it beneath my nose. Inside are scores of flame-colored threads of pure saffron. I inhale deeply, and my senses are enveloped by a wild, earthy fragrance that is almost preternaturally intense—a far cry from the saffron I usually find in the States.

Twice a year, Thiercelin, whose family has been in the spice trade since 1809, travels to Iran, where 95 percent of the world's saffron is grown, to work with farmers who harvest it by hand. Thiercelin says that it takes roughly 150,000 crocus flowers, the origin of all saffron, to produce a single kilogram of the precious spice. The type he sells is pushal grade (pictured, above), so designated because the threads compose the flower's entire stigma. Sargol grade, in which the threads consist of only the uppermost tip, is generally the most expensive, but Thiercelin contends that his pushal possesses more aroma and flavor because it requires less processing. As proof, he notes that some of France's most lauded chefs, including Pierre Gagnaire and Hélène Darroze, use his saffron in their restaurants, but that heavenly aroma is all the convincing I need. (See THE PANTRY, page 100, for sources.) —Courtenay Dunk

FARE



A Cook's Manual of Style

IN THEIR LANDMARK 1959 GUIDE to English grammar and usage *The Elements of Style*, the Cornell University English professor William Strunk Jr. and *New Yorker* essayist E. B. White offered a concise set of rules and guidelines to aid aspiring writers. Now, journalist Michael Ruhlman has sought to do the same for the culinary arts with *The Elements of Cooking*, a mini-encyclopedia of terms and tips

published last month by Scribner, which aims to impart to home cooks the hard-won knowledge the author has acquired while reporting from restaurant kitchens and the Culinary Institute of America. The book serves as a handy primer on classic French techniques, but what impressed us the most were the secrets of the professional kitchen that we've rarely seen praised in print. Below, we expound on a few of them. —*The Editors*

THE TOOLS Ruhlman sings the praises of **hotel pans**, those inexpensive "rectangular steel pans of varying sizes and depths" that are workhorses of the restaurant kitchen (and just as helpful to home cooks) for cooking, storing, and serving food. (The perforated ones function as colanders, steamers, and, in a pinch, spätzle presses.) **China caps**, which are large, conical metal strainers, are another boon to cooks at home, ideal for draining and using in place of hard-to-clean sieves, for liquifying ingredients, and for extracting flavor from stocks and sauces. Another underappreciated professional kitchen tool is **painter's tape**, which cooks use for labeling containers because it's easier to write on than masking tape and residue-free.



THE TRICKS Popular though chefs' television cooking shows are nowadays, many trade secrets have still not crossed over into the home kitchen. Foremost among them is **pan roasting**, the method of searing food in an ovenproof pan or skillet and then transferring it to the oven for faster and more uniform cooking. Making and cooking with **veal stock** is another restaurant standby often overlooked in home kitchens; the stock is especially rich in collagen and lends body and depth to all sorts of dishes. Ruhlman also highlights store-bought items that chefs (sometimes secretly) swear by, including superfine **Wondra flour**, which is used in restaurant kitchens for making feather-light batters, and **jarred mayonnaise**, loved by professional cooks for its ability to create quick, easy, and stable sauces.



THE TALK Some of the book's most valuable lessons are big-picture concepts that chefs often try to instill in their protégés. **Recipes**, Ruhlman writes, are more than mere sets of instructions; they are "guides and suggestions for a process that is infinitely nuanced". **Hearing** food as it cooks is as important as watching, smelling, and tasting it. And while home cooks may not think to apply the word **finesse** to their everyday cooking, Ruhlman writes that the "small extra efforts or movements that result in excellence or refinement" are what all cooks should aim for.



SAVEUR.COM: Visit for a Q&A with author Michael Ruhlman.



Go ahead, Truffle yourself.





Almond Joy

Who knew that nougat had a season? I used to buy packages of the chewy confection, a traditional southern European treat made with nuts, sugar, honey, and, sometimes, egg whites, from specialty stores in the States whenever the craving hit, no matter the time of year. Then I moved to Puçol, a small town in Valencia, a province of Spain where almonds grow in great quantities. After the fall harvest, I started to notice sweets-shop windows filling up with an eye-popping array of fresh almond nougat, which the Spanish call turrón, in all sorts of shapes, colors, and flavors. Everywhere I looked in the days leading up to Christmas, I saw the fresh candies. And then they were gone.

I've since tried different versions of turrón in other parts of the country, including the crunchy

blocks of nougat with whole almonds (such as the dark type called guirlache, pictured left, and the meringue-like duro style, on the right). But my first love is still the smooth, pliant, pale brown kind known as blando, "soft" (pictured in the lower center part of the plate, above), that hails from Jijona ("Xixona", in Valencian), a village about two hours south of Puçol. There, during the Moorish occupation of the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages, Arabs reportedly introduced the sweets halvah and marzipan, which probably inspired the ground-almond style for which Jijona is best known.

The turrón makers of Jijona use a flavorful local almond variety called marcona; the nuts are toasted and blended with rosemary or orange blossom honey and then molded into rectangular blocks. In addition to blando, other variations

of traditional Jijona-style turrón have evolved, including yema (a kind made with egg yolk and topped with a layer of caramelized sugar) and a la piedra (made with stone-ground almonds and flavored with lemon peel and cinnamon). Today, 80 percent of Jijona's residents owe their livelihood to the making of turrón, whether they're involved in harvesting the almonds, crafting the candy, or packaging and shipping the finished product.

I get my fresh holiday turrón at Turroneria Jijona in Puçol. The owner, a third-generation confectioner named José Francisco Picó Masiá, sells about 4,500 pounds of the nougat each year, most of it during the Christmastime rush. "It is tradition for my family," Masiá told me the last time I visited his shop. "It's what we do." (See *THE PANTRY*, page 100, for sources.) —Christina Connett



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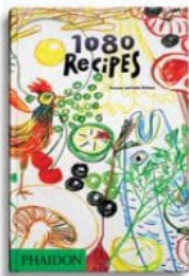
RODNEY STRONG
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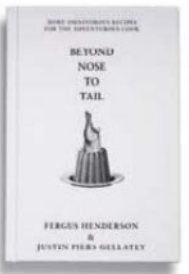
BOOK REVIEW

Top Ten Reads

From memoirs to anthologies, our favorite books of 2007 cover food from every angle

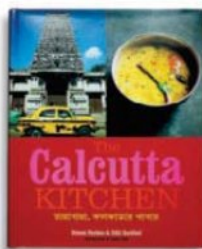


1080 RECIPES by Simone and Inés Ortega (Phaidon) This formidable (and straightforwardly named) tome, sometimes referred to as the *Iberian Joy of Cooking*, has been Spain's best-selling cookbook for more than 30 years. At long last, an English-language edition, updated with recipes that reflect that country's recent avant-garde culinary renaissance, opens this vast repository of Spanish culinary knowledge to American home cooks. —Katherine Cancila



BEYOND NOSE TO TAIL: MORE OMNIVOROUS RECIPES FOR THE ADVENTUROUS COOK by Fergus Henderson and Justin Piers Gellatly (Bloomsbury USA) It's not every cookbook that directs you to "place the [pig's] head in a large pot", but that's exactly what you'd expect (and what you get)

in the latest collection from chef Henderson, Britain's most unwavering proponent of offal. Less common fare, such as venison liver, figures prominently among the recipes in this book, but there are also enticing desserts and breads. Henderson's voice is as quirky as ever; in his recipe for pig's head and beans, for example, he advises cooks to allow the ingredients "to bond emotionally but not physically". —Sofia Perez



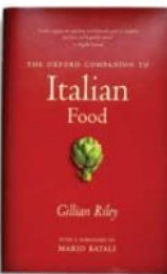
THE CALCUTTA KITCHEN by Simon Parkes and Udit Sarkhel (Interlink) Great cookbooks, like all great works of art, have the power to illuminate the unfamiliar. This book, published last

year in Britain, achieves just that, taking readers (at least those who haven't been to Calcutta) to places they've never visited, let alone imagined. In a compendium of masterly recipes, essays, and images, coauthors Parkes and Sarkhel and photographer Jason Lowe serve up a vision of India's third-largest city that stays with you long after you've left the kitchen. —James Oseland



IMBIBE! by David Wondrich (Perigee) In his latest book, the noted cocktail historian Wondrich gives us a tribute to what he calls "the first legitimate American culinary art". Taking his inspiration, and his recipes, from a mostly forgotten 19th-century New Yorker named Jerry Thomas,

who wrote his own treatise on mixology that became a barman's bible in its day, Wondrich offers what amounts to a history of industrial-age America writ in booze, covering everything from punches, fizzes, and sours to toddies, slings, and juleps. Drink recipes are accompanied by prose elucidating their provenance and instructions on rendering them in the modern age in your home. —Todd Coleman



THE OXFORD COMPANION TO ITALIAN FOOD by Gillian Riley (Oxford Press) Finding authoritative sources on Italian cooking has always been a bit of a wild goose chase; there is no shortage of niche publications, glossaries, scholarly cookbooks, and food-focused travel guides

but little in the way of a single, go-to volume. Enter British historian Riley, who has compiled and written an exhaustive, alphabetized encyclopedia on the foods and culinary traditions of Italy, from Abruzzo (the region) to zuppa

inglese (the custard). I particularly enjoyed the broad-themed entries like "Arab Influence" (an excellent history lesson in its own right) and "Myths" (which addresses, among other things, dubious accounts of the invention of pasta). —Dana Bowen



STEALING BUDDHA'S DINNER by Bich Minh Nguyen (Viking) In this gracefully written, bitter-sweet memoir, author Nguyen uses food as a narrative tool to tell a poignant story of cultural assimilation and emotional transformation.

Nguyen emigrated with her family from Vietnam in 1975, when she was a small child, and settled in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where she was dazzled by America's colorful ready-to-eat bounty, like Whoppers, Trix, Kool-Aid, and Jolly Ranchers—foods that became seductive totems of the new culture Nguyen longed to embody and, literally, devour. By the end, I too was inspired to consider anew the foods I've loved from childhood until now. —Lily Binns

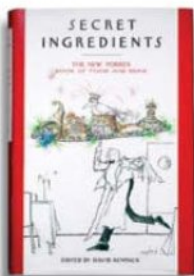


REVOLUTIONARY CHINESE COOKBOOK: RECIPES FROM HUNAN PROVINCE by Fuchsia Dunlop (W. W. Norton) In her acclaimed first book, *Land of Plenty* (W. W. Norton, 2003), Dunlop offered an encyclopedic look at Sichuanese cuisine,

establishing herself as a meticulous chronicler of regional Chinese cooking. In this book, on the classic dishes of China's Hunan Province, she takes a different tack, presenting personal anecdotes, vividly recounted local legends, and journalistic reportage as preambles to the recipes, which amply describe that province's varied cui-

BOOK REVIEW

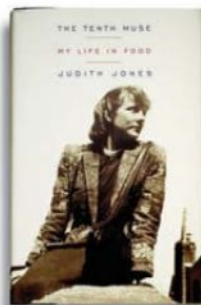
sine, from spicy hot pots to subtly flavored stews. To my delight, the best recipes, like the one for the delicious Chairman Mao's Red-Braised Pork, were also the easiest. —*Georgia Freedman*



SECRET INGREDIENTS: THE NEW YORKER BOOK OF FOOD AND DRINK edited by David Remnick (*Random House*) I found nary a bland morsel in this collection of 80 years' worth of food writing taken from the pages of America's foremost

magazine of letters. The book is a veritable pantheon of *The New Yorker's* most venerated contributors, from A. J. Liebling and Joseph Mitchell to M.F.K. Fisher and Woody Allen. It also includes short stories from Don DeLillo, Chang-rae Lee, and other contemporary literary lights. For me the book reaches its apogee with John McPhee's 1968 profile of the legendary wild-foodist Euell Gibbons. To read this sparely elegant, moving portrait is to remember that writing well about food

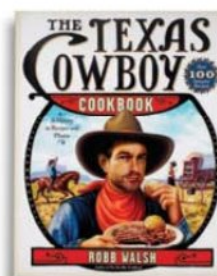
is really no different from writing well about life itself. —*David McAninch*



THE TENTH MUSE: MY LIFE IN FOOD by Judith Jones (*Knopf*) Julia Child may have introduced American home cooks to the pleasures of French cooking, but it was Jones, a young editor at Alfred A. Knopf, who introduced Julia Child to America. And that

was only the beginning. Over the past half century, Jones has almost single-handedly scripted the American food revolution, discovering and publishing a roster of culinary luminaries ranging from *SAVEUR* contributing editor Madhur Jaffrey to Marion Cunningham, author of the updated *Fannie Farmer Cookbook* (Knopf, 1996). In this memoir, Jones lets us peek into her authors' lives. She kneads mountains of bread in James Beard's Greenwich Village town house, noshes on squirrel and sips bourbon with Edna Lewis,

and argues over recipes with Marcella Hazan. While her personal revelations are few, the warm, cosmopolitan world Jones depicts is a joy to inhabit. —*Sarah Karnasiewicz*



THE TEXAS COWBOY COOKBOOK: A HISTORY IN RECIPES AND PHOTOS by Robb Walsh (*Broadway Books*) A cowboy cookbook? How many variations on beans and coffee could there possibly be? It turns out that cowboy cuisine is

a far more complex matter than dime novels would have us believe. In this smart compilation, Walsh, food critic for the *Houston Press*, deconstructs popular myths about life on the range, pointing out that the campfire fare of the American West drew on Mexican, Cajun, African-American, and Southern-Anglo cooking traditions. Yes, there are recipes for chili and chicken fried steak, but there's also wild duck gumbo and calabacitas con carne (meat-and-squash stew). —*Beth Kracklauer*

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This feature adjusts water temperature and cycle length to reduce energy consumption by up to 20%.

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Nexxt 800 Series Dryer

- 3 hr. **WRINKLEBLOCK®**
- Up to 2 hr. timed dry



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Estimations based on 2007 DOE projections and statistics in comparison to the Nexxt 700 Series (WPMC6401UC) or Nexxt Platinum (WPMC640SUC) clothes washer. Comparison based on lifetime water/energy savings versus conventional model.
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LIST

6 Food-Focused Charities

Here are a few ways to give as good as you get this holiday season

BY LIZ PEARSON

THERE ARE MORE opportunities than ever for making sure that fewer people go hungry during the holidays, and year-round, as organizations evolve to address specific needs and appeal to Americans' desire to know how their donations are being used. We've selected a handful of charities with particularly innovative approaches

to combating hunger, promoting sustainable agriculture, and advancing development in regions struggling with malnutrition. You can learn more about these and other food-focused charities, including details of how they allocate donations, at www.guidestar.org. To benefit multiple organizations with a single donation, visit www.networkforgood.org.

AMERICA'S SECOND HARVEST (800/771-2303; www.secondharvest.org) In 2006, America's Second Harvest, working with more than 200 local charities and city agencies in all 50 states, distributed \$576 million in goods and services to more than 80 percent of America's food banks and food rescue organizations. Individual donations of funds, food, and time helped to feed 25 million people without access to adequate nutrition.

FARM AID (800/327-6243; www.farmaid.org) Most people know Farm Aid, founded in 1985 by the musicians John Mellencamp, Willie Nelson, and Neil Young, for its high-profile annual fund-raising concert. But the organization operates year-round, advocating for fair domestic farming policies, giving financial counseling and material support to American farm families in crisis, and offering education in efficient farming methods.

THE FOOD PROJECT (781/259-8621; www.thefoodproject.org) One of the country's more successful urban agriculture initiatives, the Food Project pairs more than a hundred Boston-area teens each year with volunteers who help them farm 31 acres in rural Lincoln, Massachusetts, and on several urban plots in Boston. The project produces 250,000 pounds of organic produce annually for local shelters, farmers' markets, and the organization's Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program.

THE FULL BELLY PROJECT (910/452-0975; www.fullbellyproject.org) Founded in 2003 on the principle that simple agricultural machines can dramatically improve the lives of farmers in developing countries, this charity provides a manually operated nut sheller that processes peanuts and several other types of nuts ten times faster than hands can. That makes no small dif-

ference to the half billion people around the world who rely on peanuts as a primary source of protein and income. So far the organization has distributed more than a thousand assembly kits—each one capable of producing a thousand nut shellers—in Central America, the Caribbean, the Western Pacific, and Africa.

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL (800/422-0474; www.heifer.org) This worldwide organization is a leader in supporting grassroots development projects that eventually become self-sustaining. Its best-known program, the Heifer Catalog, allows donors to select the type of livestock their donation will buy, be it goats for families in Indonesia, pigs for villages in Ukraine, or sheep for rural communities in Cameroon. Heifer also provides microloans to small-business ventures in developing countries and training in soil and livestock management.

SHARE OUR STRENGTH (800/969-4767; www.strength.org) This 23-year-old nonprofit has had notable success partnering with corporations like Food Network and American Express to capitalize on Americans' growing interest in how their food is produced. Proceeds from its Taste of the Nation benefits—this year featuring 3,000 chefs in 50 cities—go to local organizations that serve the 12 million American children who need food pantries and other forms of assistance to obtain the nutrition they require. Other initiatives include Operation Frontline, which enlists chefs and nutritionists to lead courses on healthful eating for low-income families, and the Great American Bake Sale, which raises money and awareness through volunteer-led sales of baked goods across the country. 

Volunteers serve the hungry at a Chicago soup kitchen in 1948, facing page.

GIVING by the NUMBERS



More than **35 million** Americans live in households that don't always have enough food to eat; **852 million** people worldwide are chronically undernourished.

About **65 percent** of American households with an annual income under **\$100,000** give to charity. That's more people than those who vote.



By some estimates, every dollar invested in initiatives to reduce malnutrition can yield between **\$5** and **\$20** worth of material benefits, in the form of food, income, or shelter.



Each year, Americans give about **\$290 billion** to charitable organizations. There are more than **2,600** food-focused charities nationwide.





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BITTERSWEET

CELLAR

Vintage Beauties

France's single-harvest champagnes add delicacy to the holiday table

BY PAUL LUKACS

WINES SPARKLE AND BUBBLE throughout the grape-growing world, but none combine delicacy and depth as gracefully as the wines made in the region roughly 90 miles east of Paris known as Champagne. True champagne remains unequaled in terms of subtlety, complexity, and, certainly, status. Even wine drinkers who justifiably sing the praises of California's sparkling wines, Italy's proseccos, or Spain's cavas tend to splurge on French champagne when it comes time to toast the New Year or another

special occasion. But champagne can do more than ring out the old and ring in the new. It is above all a wine—indeed, one of the world's great ones, the object of centuries' worth of artisanship and refinement—and it can be enjoyed like any other fine wine: before and during a meal.

In this regard, vintage champagnes—the small minority of wines from that region made from a single, choice harvest—are my favorite. They cost only slightly more than the nonvintage blends that



CELLAR



RECIPE

Lobster Bisque

SERVES 4

Champagne goes especially well with cream-based soups like this one because the wine's effervescence offers such a pleasing contrast with their silky texture. The recipe for this luxurious bisque (left) is based on one in *La Cuisine* by Raymond Oliver (Leon Amiel, 1969). We found a full-bodied rosé champagne to be the ideal accompaniment.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 12 sprigs flat-leaf parsley | 1 large yellow onion, finely chopped |
| 6 sprigs thyme | Kosher salt, to taste |
| 1 fresh bay leaf | 2 tbsp. tomato paste |
| 1 4-lb. lobster | 2 cups white wine |
| 6 tbsp. butter | 5 cups fish stock |
| 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil | Pinch of cayenne pepper |
| 1/4 cup brandy | 1 cup heavy cream |
| 3 large shallots, finely chopped | 1 tbsp. cornstarch |
| 2 carrots, finely chopped | 4 egg yolks |
| 2 ribs celery, finely chopped | 2 tbsp. chopped chives |
| 1 clove garlic, finely chopped | |

1. Tie 6 sprigs parsley, thyme, and bay leaf together with kitchen twine to make a bouquet garni (see page 94); set aside. Working over a sieve set over a bowl to collect the lobster's juices, separate claws and tail from body and crack claws. Cut tail into quarters crosswise; halve body lengthwise. Discard intestinal tract and sac behind head. Reserve lobster parts and juices separately.

2. Heat butter and oil in a deep skillet over high heat. Add lobster parts; cook, covered, turning once, until bright red, 6–7 minutes. Remove skillet from heat. Pour the lobster-infused butter into a bowl; set aside. Pour brandy over lobster; ignite with a match. When the flames subside, transfer lobster to a plate.

3. Heat reserved lobster-infused butter in the skillet over medium-high heat. Add remaining parsley, shallots, carrots, celery, garlic, onions, and salt. Cook until caramelized, 18–20 minutes. Add tomato paste; cook until browned, 3–4 minutes. Add wine; cook, scraping up browned bits, 2–3 minutes. Transfer mixture to a large pot. Add reserved lobster and juices, reserved bouquet garni, stock, cayenne, and salt; boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer, covered, for 15–20 minutes; remove soup from heat.

4. Remove lobster meat from shells and cut into small chunks; set aside. Using a meat mallet, crush lobster shells; return to soup. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low; simmer, covered, for 10 minutes. Strain soup through a cheesecloth-lined fine sieve into a medium pot. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to medium-low. Whisk together cream, cornstarch, and yolks in a bowl. Slowly pour 1 cup soup into cream mixture while whisking constantly. Whisk cream mixture into soup. Cook, whisking constantly, until thickened, about 5 minutes. Serve soup garnished with reserved lobster and chives.

dominate the market, but their taste is almost as compelling as that of the super-expensive cuvées (that is, specific blends or batches) like Moët & Chandon's Dom Pérignon and Louis Roederer's Cristal. They aren't bargains (high demand and limited production all but ensure that no champagnes are), but good vintage champagnes display a remarkable finesse that makes them more than worth the expense, especially when savored with a meal.

Dry, or brut, vintage champagnes (see "The Six Main Styles of Champagne", page 32) are especially versatile partners at the table. They complement fried and spicy foods, egg dishes, and all sorts of soups (including ones like the lobster bisque shown on this page). I've particularly enjoyed vintage bottles with omelettes, oysters, tempuras, tamales, and—in a pairing that has forever spoiled me for the customary accompaniment of beer or sake—sushi. The only thing most vintage champagnes don't go well with is dessert, as any brut champagne comes across as tart and even sour in the company of sugar.

The complexity and deep, long character that make vintage champagnes such excellent food wines owe to a unique set of circumstances. Because the Champagne region has only a marginal climate for grape growing, not every harvest yields first-rate wine. Vintners thus fashion their nonvintage

Choosing the Right Champagne Glass

When it comes to getting the most pleasure out of a sophisticated champagne like the vintage ones described in these pages, the kind of glass the wine is served in makes a considerable difference. Though they possess a certain retro chic and are de rigueur for a classic champagne fountain, the shallow, saucerlike stemmed glasses

known as *coupes* allow both fizz and fragrance to dissipate quickly, as do tall, trumpet-shaped glasses. And since part of the fun of champagne is in being able to see the bubbles, heavy crystal glassware with etched or beveled surfaces is not a good choice. This is a situation in which the old standby is still the best: tall, unornamented

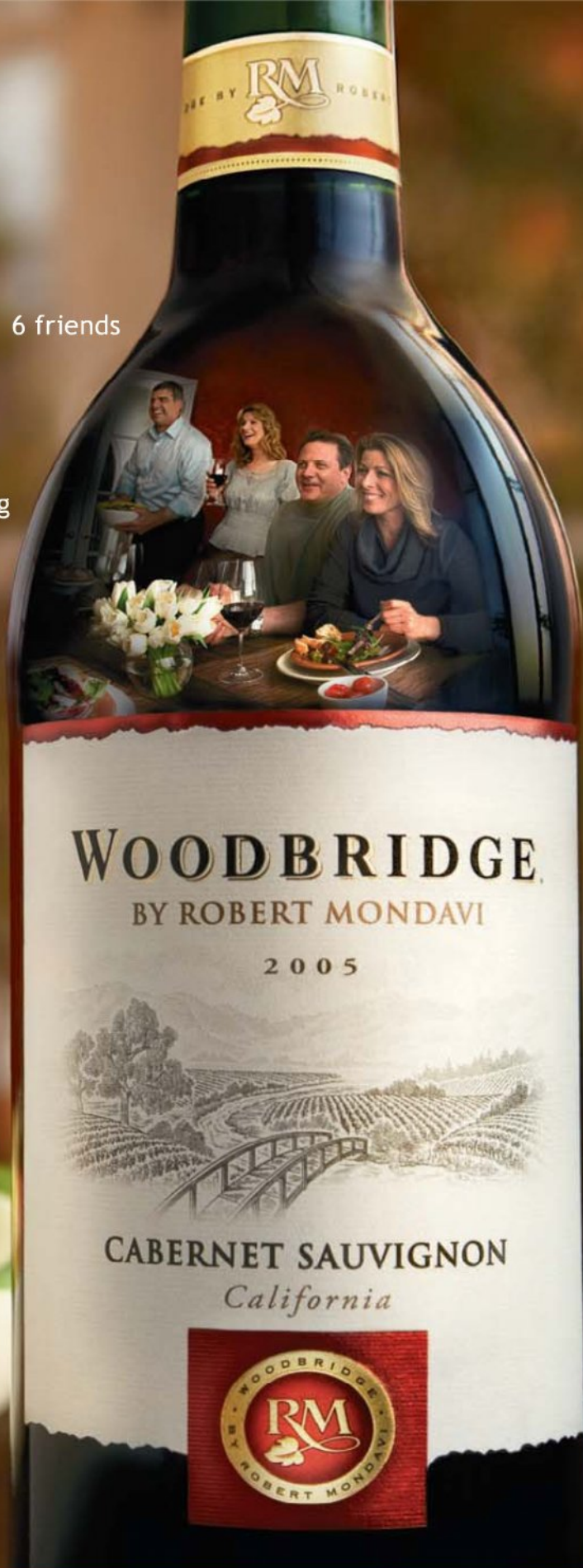
flutes, like the ones shown on the previous page, that taper inward slightly at the mouth. Their shape retains both the bubbles and the bouquet, and their simplicity keeps the spotlight where it belongs: on the wine. What should you do with all those *coupes* in the cupboard? Well, they're fine for serving ice cream. —P.L.

6 friends

Any Tuesday evening

2 hours enjoying the conversation

1 bottle of



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MAKE EVERY DAY A LITTLE LESS EVERYDAY

WOODBIDGE.
BY ROBERT MONDAVI

CELLAR

blends, which constitute the vast majority of champagne sold worldwide, by combining wines from lesser vintages with reserves from better ones. Occasionally, however, if the weather has been warm enough, without too much rain during the harvest, and if the grapes have ripened adequately so as to yield a sufficiently large crop, a portion of the wine from a single vintage may be deemed good enough to be bottled on its own.

These single-harvest wines, then, invariably are made with only high-quality grapes; in the Champagne region, that always means chardonnay, pinot noir, pinot meunier, or some combination of the three. What's more, those grapes frequently come from the best vineyards, often the ones classified as premier cru or grand cru. Top-tier grapes translate into wines with especially memorable aromas and flavors, precisely the qualities that make them so gratifying when paired with food.

That many of these single-harvest wines bear a striking resemblance to much more expensive luxury or prestige champagnes like Cristal and Dom Pérignon is no accident. Like vintage champagnes, those famously coveted cuvées are vintage-dated and made from the best grapes harvested from the most prized vineyards during a superior year. And yet most vintage champagnes are sold at one-half to one-quarter the price of the same producer's luxury cuvée, which the less expensive wine may well resemble closely in both quality and style.

Vintage champagnes offer still other advantages. Most are aged for at least two or three years longer than nonvintage blends are. That extra time allows them to harmonize fully, so they are almost always ready to drink when purchased. Yet these wines can also age effortlessly at home, becoming mellower and toastier with time in the bottle. For me, young, nonvintage champagne, with all its fizzy zeal intact, proves perfect for toasts and late-night revelry. But at a grand holiday feast, vintage champagne's subtler, more layered personality wins out. In fact, these wines are cause for a celebration of their own, no matter the time of year. 

SAVEUR.COM: *A tip for opening champagne.*

IN THE SAVEUR KITCHEN, page 94: *All about bouquet garni.*

Tasting Notes

Here are ten excellent vintage French champagnes, listed in my order of preference, that nicely represent the range of styles available. Since many retailers put champagnes on sale at this time of year, you may be able to pay less than the prices indicated below. (See THE PANTRY, page 100, for sources.) —P.L.

LOUIS ROEDERER BLANC DE BLANCS 2000 (\$72) Beautifully structured, with a refined character; on a par with Cristal, Roederer's luxury cuvée, but sold at less than a third the price.

CHARLES HEIDSIECK BLANC DES MILLÉNAIRES 1995 (\$110) A thoroughbred, with great complexity, concentration, and finesse.

BOLLINGER LA GRANDE ANNÉE 1999 (\$125) Pricier than most but toasty and deep; an exceptionally versatile wine that's suited to a variety of foods.

HENRIOT BRUT 1998 (\$70) Impeccably balanced, with an enticing bouquet followed by a satisfying depth of flavor for a variety of food pairings.

POMMERY BRUT GRAND CRU 1998 (\$80) Made in a delicate style, with citrus-tinged aromas and flavors, which make it appropriate for light fare.

TAITTINGER BRUT MILLÉSIME 2000 (\$75) Deeper in character than Taittinger's popular nonvintage "La Française" but still fresh and lively—qualities that make it an excellent choice with sushi.

GOSSET GRAND MILLÉSIME 1999 (\$85) Substantial and tightly wound; time in the bottle will bring out its best characteristics.

DEUTZ ROSÉ 2002 (\$75) Youthfully vibrant and satisfyingly long on the palate; will pair well with the lobster bisque shown on the previous page.

PHILIPPONNAT GRAND BLANC BRUT 1999 (\$75) Crisp and dry; takes on additional richness with time in the glass.

MOËT & CHANDON GRAND VINTAGE 2000 (\$65) Sumptuous but slightly sweet; try it with boldly flavored Asian dishes.

The Six Main Styles of Champagne

All French champagnes, including the Champagne region's excellent vintage wines, are classified according to a few principal designations, or styles, that denote either the types of grapes used or the amount of sugar added (the latter is contained in the dosage, the small amount of still wine added to champagne just before the cork goes into the bottle). You'll see many of the same designations on the labels of other types of sparkling wines, including some American ones.

BLANC DE BLANCS This designation applies to wines made entirely with white grapes; in the case of true French champagne (that is, wines made in the region of the same name), it translates as 100 percent chardonnay. Many blancs de blancs age exceptionally well.

BLANC DE NOIRS The name means white from blacks. Accordingly, these are light-colored champagnes made from the juice of dark-skinned grapes (pinot noir, pinot meunier, or a combination of the two for French champagne). These days, the designation is found more commonly on the labels of American sparkling wines than on those of French champagnes. Most blancs de noirs are made in the brut style (see below).

BRUT Roughly 95 percent of all French champagne is classified as brut, or dry, meaning that the dosage added to the bottle contains very little sugar. Brut champagnes encompass a wide spectrum of quality, taste, and character.

DEMI-SEC Demi-sec wines contain a dosage with a noticeable amount of sugar. These cham-

pagnes are decidedly sweet but not sappy and are the only ones that pair well with desserts (and, it's worth mentioning, wedding cake).

EXTRA-DRY In an instance of misleading nomenclature, extra-dry wines actually taste slightly sweet, as they contain a dosage with a small amount of sugar. (Adding to the confusion, the most popular extra-dry champagne, Moët & Chandon's nonvintage White Star, doesn't even include the designation on its label.) This is a popular style for sparkling wines made in the United States.

ROSÉ Made either by blending in a little red wine or by letting the clear grape juice come into contact with the dark grape skins, rosé champagnes range in hue from pale onion skin to salmon and copper and vary widely in taste. —P.L.

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KITCHENWISE



A Year's Bounty

A farm kitchen in British Columbia reflects a life of self-reliance

BY GEORGIA FREEDMAN PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE CHEN

SUSTAINABLE-FARMING ADVOCATES Jeanne-Marie Herman and her husband, Michael Ableman, author of the book *Fields of Plenty*, among others (see *SAVEUR*'s June/July 2006 issue), know from years of experience that a well-designed kitchen is a matter as much of necessity as of aesthetic choice. When they moved in 2000 from Southern California to a Victorian farmhouse on six acres of land on Saltspring Island, across the Strait of Georgia from Vancouver, British Columbia, they were determined to live al-

most exclusively on food raised and produced on or near their small farm. "I've made a commitment that everything I serve will be as organic and as local as possible," says Jeanne-Marie, who does nearly all of the cooking, preserving, drying, and canning that sustains the family through the year.

The couple's level of dedication to eating local requires hard work and plenty of careful planning, as well as a kitchen that can accommodate all manner of food preparation. Jeanne-Marie's busiest time is the

KITCHENWISE

late summer, when produce arrives from the surrounding fields by the bushel. Stone fruits, like apricots and Italian plums, are dried in an electric food dehydrator, after which they're left in storage until winter. The majority of the harvest, however, goes into the bright sauces and jams that Jeanne-Marie puts up in glass jars. In the fall, apple and pear sauces and quince chutneys join the larder; squash and root vegetables are kept in the cool, dark pantry. By late October there's enough food stored to last the couple, their four-year-old son, Benjamin, and Michael's son Aaron, age 25, through the following spring.

The kitchen's centerpiece is a three-and-a-half-foot-long island, which a friend made out of acacia and maple wood salvaged from the farm the couple owned back in California. The island, though beautiful, is ultimately utilitarian: casters allow it to be moved around easily, and its surface is a single, broad chopping block that has an opening at one end so that stems, peels, and other detritus can be swept directly into the compost bucket that sits in a compartment below. The remainder of the space underneath the chopping block could be used for storage, but Jeanne-Marie has instead given it over to Benjamin, who sometimes plays there when she cooks. Other essential components of the kitchen are a capacious sink and a wide, four-burner 1950s O'Keefe & Merritt stove (see photo, page 35), with an accompanying industrial ventilation hood. "I need to be able to put two or three 20-quart pots on at once," says Jeanne-Marie. While pragmatism reigns in

the family's kitchen, Jeanne-Marie was determined not to sacrifice aesthetics: the room's cherry cabinets and river-slate countertops harmonize with the warm furnishings of the rest of the house.

If any meal showcases the fruits of the family's labors, it's their annual Christmas dinner. This year, butternut squash roasts in the oven while Jeanne-Marie mashes potatoes with garlic and then sautés chard, all grown on the couple's farm. The houska (braided bread) and kolacky (fruit-filled pastries) she's baked for the occasion are longstanding favorites she learned to make from her Czech paternal grandmother. The turkey wasn't raised on the farm, but it didn't come from far away: Jeanne-Marie bought it from a woman who runs the local post office and raises poultry on the side. And the dried mushrooms in the wild rice stuffing are from neighbors who foraged them in the woods nearby. Even as she relishes this special meal, ever practical Jeanne-Marie confesses she's already imagining what she's going to do with the stock she'll make tomorrow from the leftover turkey. (For more information about the Herman-Ableman farm, see *THE PANTRY*, page 100.)

Would you like to share your own kitchen design ideas with other SAVEUR readers? Send us photos of your kitchen, both overall and in detail, along with your name, address, and a few lines telling us what's special about it. Please note that unused submissions cannot be acknowledged or returned. Our address: Kitchenwise, SAVEUR, 15 East 32nd Street, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10016.



PENNY DE LOS SANTOS

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Utilitarian Chic | For making applesauce, Jeanne-Marie uses this gadget, the Peel Away, which peels, cores, and slices an apple in only five seconds. Its retro look complements the kitchen's vintage and reclaimed fixtures perfectly.



Sweet Rewards | In a variation on her grandmother's recipe for prune-filled kolacky, Jeanne-Marie fills pastries with a rich, tangy paste made from apricots collected on friends' farms and dried earlier in the year.



Tabletop Traditions | Jeanne-Marie has collected vintage china for years, but for holiday meals she uses dishes and silverware inherited from her grandmothers. "It's a time to remember my family and the things they brought to my life," she says.

Four perfect gifts for your favorite foodies & book lovers!

THE TENTH MUSE: MY LIFE IN FOOD

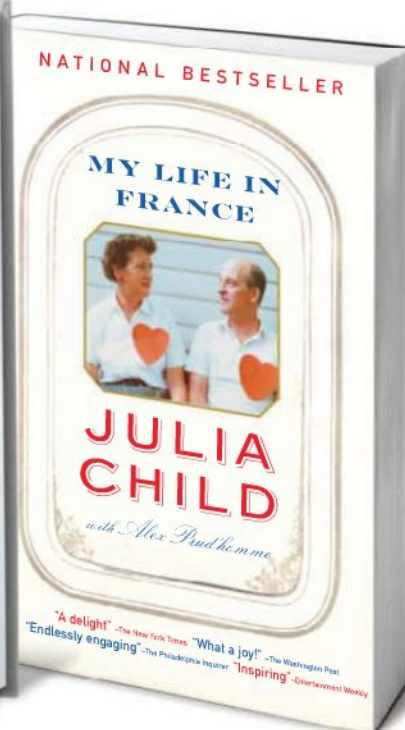
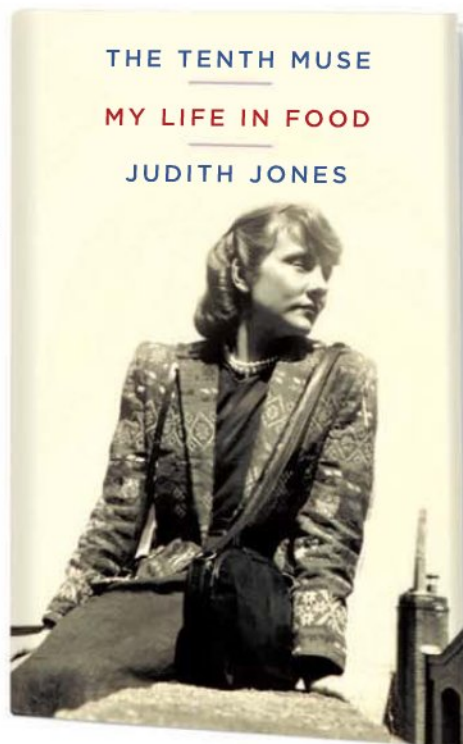
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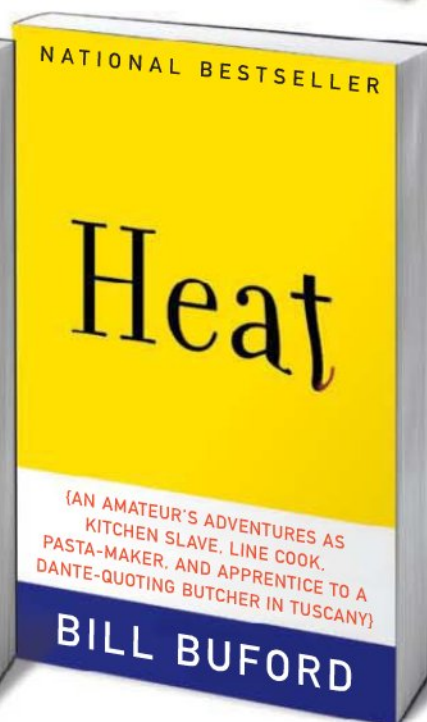
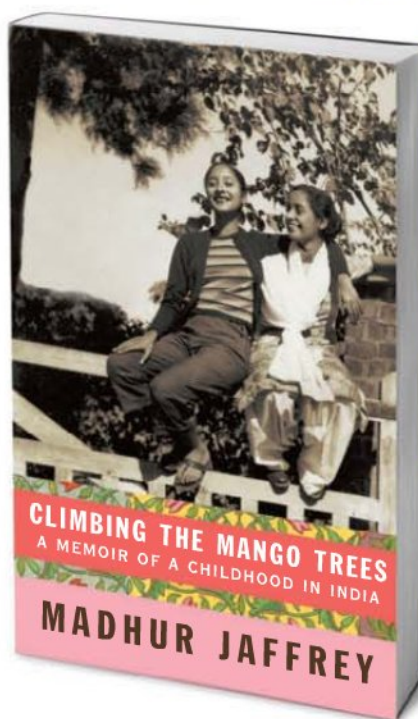
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From the acclaimed food writer of the classic *An Invitation to Indian Cooking*, a memoir of a childhood in India.

“Jaffrey's taste memories sparkle with enthusiasm, and her talent for conveying them makes the book relentlessly appetizing.”

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HEAT

BY Bill Buford

From the acclaimed writer and editor, “a sumptuous meal.... A superbly detailed picture of life” in the kitchen of superstar chef Mario Batali's legendary restaurant.

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IN PAPERBACK FROM VINTAGE BOOKS



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Winter Squash Gratin Makes 8 Servings

- 1 1/2 cups grated Cabot Sharp Cheddar (about 6 ounces)
- 1 1/2 cups fresh bread crumbs (about 3 slices firm white bread)
- 2 tablespoons Cabot Salted Butter
- 2 cups chopped onions
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme leaves, crumbled
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 pounds dry-fleshed winter squash, such as Buttercup, Hubbard or Kabocha, peeled and seeded
- 3/4-1 cup chicken broth



1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Combine cheese and bread crumbs in bowl and set aside.
2. In large skillet over medium heat, melt butter. Add onions and sugar. Stir often until onions are golden, about 10 minutes. Stir in salt, thyme and pepper, then transfer mixture to 1 1/2-quart baking dish.
3. Cut squash into smaller chunks and cut these chunks into 1/8-inch-thick slices. Add to onions and stir together well.
4. Pour 3/4 cup of chicken broth evenly over squash. Cover dish tightly with lid or foil and bake for about 70 minutes, or until squash is tender and broth is nearly all absorbed. If squash appears dry, add remaining 1/4 cup broth.
5. Sprinkle squash with reserved bread crumb mixture. Bake until topping is golden, about 20 minutes longer.

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REPORTER

Nighthawks at the Brasserie

When dining at Paris's Au Pied de Cochon, arrive hungry—and stay late

BY JAY CHESHES

BEFORE THE SO-CALLED *forts des Halles*—the strong men who worked nights lugging meat and produce at Paris's famed Les Halles wholesale food market—decamped for the suburbs, Au Pied de Cochon at five in the morning was the wildest party in town. As Paris awoke and the market disgorged its blue-collar workers, the nearby brasserie's dining room and bar heaved with life; haulers and off-duty butchers took their seats alongside Paris's nocturnal creatures, who were only just winding up their revelries, and slurped oysters and chilled beaujolais. Musicians working for tips helped fuel the festivities, and it wasn't unusual in those days to find patrons passed out on the banquettes at sunrise. "I remember nights when you would arrive at one in the morning and still be there eight hours later, re-making the world at nine in the morning," says Pierre Rival, a French food critic who has recently written a book, called *Au Pied de Cochon*, about the restaurant, which celebrates its 60th anniversary this year.

Stars of French film and song could frequently be found ensconced at corner tables. Rival remembers the time several decades ago when the famously louche and mercurial singer-songwriter Serge Gainsbourg walked in with a coterie of hangers-on just before dawn. The place was bustling, and Gainsbourg ordered lavishly. "He got the best oysters: huitres de Belon—twice the price of all the others," recalls Rival. When

A hearty bowl of French onion soup, like the one shown at right, remains a signature dish at Au Pied de Cochon.

JAY CHESHES is a food and travel writer based in New York City. This is his first article for SAVEUR.



REPORTER

RECIPE

Soupe à l'Oignon

(French Onion Soup)

SERVES 6

Braised onions, bread, and melted cheese are the main components of this timeless dish, which epitomizes the robust cuisine of Parisian brasseries. To make it, you'll need six sturdy ceramic bowls that may be safely placed under the broiler. This recipe is based on one in *Bistro Cooking* by Patricia Wells (Workman, 1989).

- 1 cup white wine
- 1/2 cup plus 3 tbsp. sherry
- 10 tbsp. butter
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 3 large yellow onions, thinly sliced
- Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste
- 6 sprigs flat-leaf parsley
- 6 sprigs thyme
- 2 fresh bay leaves
- 2 qts. beef stock
- 12 1/2"-thick slices baguette
- 2 cloves garlic, smashed
- 6 cups grated gruyère cheese
- 2 cups finely grated parmigiano-reggiano

1. Heat oven to 425°. Combine wine, 1/2 cup of the sherry, 8 tbsp. of the butter, sugar, onions, and salt and pepper in a 9" x 13" casserole dish and braise, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the onions just begin to brown, 40–45 minutes. Remove casserole from oven, cover with foil, and continue braising in oven, stirring occasionally, until caramelized, about 1 hour more. Keep the onions warm.

2. Meanwhile, tie parsley, thyme, and bay leaves together with kitchen twine to make a bouquet garni (see page 94). Put bouquet garni and stock into a pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, partially covered, for 30 minutes. Remove and discard bouquet garni. Stir in remaining sherry and cook for 5 minutes more.

3. While the broth simmers, spread the baguette slices with the remaining butter. Toast in a skillet over medium heat, turning once, until golden, 5–7 minutes. Rub the slices generously with garlic and set aside. Discard any remaining garlic.

4. Heat broiler with rack 6" from element. Arrange 6 heatproof bowls on a foil-lined sheet tray, divide onions and broth between bowls, and stir together. Place 2 baguette slices in each bowl; top each with about 1 cup gruyère and about 1/3 cup parmigiano. Broil until cheeses are browned and bubbly, 3–5 minutes. Serve immediately.

the bill arrived, Gainsbourg, in one of his moods, refused to pay. "Come, Monsieur Gainsbourg," beseeched the waiter. "Be nice." The singer pouted: "I don't feel like paying." Though Gainsbourg was a regular, the management was hardly prepared to forgive the tab. When a few gendarmes walked through the door, he finally relented, but only on the condition that the police officers sit down and dine with him. "Then the police drove him home in the back of their van," Rival says.

Despite a fierce attachment to the latest fashions, Parisians have always been loyal to their most enduring institutions—Brasserie Lipp, Les Deux Magots, Le Dôme, La Coupole. Au Pied de Cochon is no exception. It's the best-known all-night restaurant in Paris and probably the least stuffy of the city's old-time brasseries; it has been in continuous operation, 24 hours a day, since it opened, in 1947. Though its beau monde heyday ended in the 1970s, when Les Halles was paved over to make way for an underground shopping mall, it has preserved its reputation as a night owls' redoubt. A wee-hours visit to sample the restaurant's namesake pig's foot entrée or its famous onion soup remains obligatory for anyone who pines for bygone Paris.

MY MOST RECENT MEAL at Au Pied de Cochon, last winter, began at a shamefully early hour: that is, well before midnight. I arrived sometime after nine in the evening, hoping to recapture the magic of a previous visit, years before, when I'd had a memorable 5:00 A.M. "dinner" with friends after a boisterous night out. That time, I'd ordered the pied de cochon farci périgourdine, a boneless pig's foot stuffed with foie gras, which had seemed to me, at that pre-dawn moment, like the world's most decadent meal.

Everything looked more or less the same on my recent visit. Pig was still the dominant motif; likenesses of the animal were hidden in the restaurant's wall panels, etched into the façade of the bar, stitched into the carpet, and tucked away in vitrines along the stairs. Even the legs of the dining tables were shaped like pigs' feet, as were the handles of the restaurant's front doors. (The restaurant goes through some 85,000 real pigs' feet a year.) The dining room had begun to fill up, with big groups of out-

of-towners and couples on dates. I was led to my table, and the maitre d'—tall, debonair, prematurely gray—offered me a trousseau des Halles, the house cocktail of sparkling wine and crème de cassis, garnished with a sour cherry and named for the big hole in the ground that persisted for years while the market was being dismantled. I commented that the atmosphere seemed more subdued than on my last visit, but I was assured that the late crowd still gets as out of hand as ever, especially after rugby matches at the Stade de France, when fans flood in from the nearby subway station. The maitre d' told me he keeps a rugby schedule on hand so that he can anticipate the rush.

I began my meal with the celebrated French onion soup. In her 1989 book *Bistro Cooking*, Patricia Wells divulged the restaurant's hitherto secret recipe, which involved braising the onions in the oven and using chicken stock as the base. In recent years, the kitchen has reverted to the more customary beef stock, but I found the soup to be no less a restorative, drenched-in-cheese delight. The oysters, too, were top-notch. I ordered a half dozen, each of a different kind, and all arrived fat and briny and coddled in ice.

Hoping to reprise my inaugural pig's foot experience from years earlier, I ordered as my main course what seemed a similarly indulgent choice: the tentation de Saint Antoine, named for the patron saint of butchers. A combination plate of the pig's snout, ear, tail, and trotter, roasted and served with a side of french fries, the dish was brought to my table on a copper-domed platter. To my disappointment, I found it to be more gimmick than gourmet; the pork parts were chewy and gristly, and the fries were soggy.

But then, for regulars, not the tourists who populate the place at the conventional lunch and dinner hours, food has never ranked high among the reasons for dining at Au Pied de Cochon. Indeed, if you've been eating here for decades, the charm of the place is about much more than what comes out of the kitchen. Sitting next to me at dinner as I considered dessert were an elderly couple celebrating their anniversary at the restaurant for the 59th time. Or was it the 60th? "The first time we ate here was 1948," said the elegantly dressed gentleman.

Every weekend, someone somewhere in the world drives a Porsche across a finish line in first place. Whenever that happens, the crowd roars

Porsche knows how to win—and how to celebrate. After hurtling across the finish line, triumphant drivers drench crowds of fans and the press with bottles of champagne before tasting it themselves. No victory is complete without that ritual.

Just as makers of fine wines do, Porsche knows that success is more than a magnificent sport; it is a feat of engineering. The legacy of one of the world's top luxury brands stems from founding father Dr. Ferdinand Porsche's innovative automotive designs and his passion for high-performance vehicles. Neither over- nor under-engineered, the company's renowned machines take the world's toughest racing courses in stride. Rounding hairpin turns, climbing treacherous mountain passes, or outlasting their competition in 24-hour races, like the Le Mans and Daytona, Porsche's race cars are a testament to the maker's ingenuity. Although Ferdinand Porsche's cars have, from the beginning, been built for racing, they

have always been reliable enough to be driven off the track and at home—which, even today, is a quality that very few other automakers can claim. That is why, in the eyes of many, Porsche leads the field of motor sports.

Like many great companies, Porsche begins with a family story, in this case with the singular vision of engineer Ferdinand Porsche. Apprenticed to his father as a plumber at an early age, Porsche fell head over heels for automobiles. By the age of 25, he had developed the world's first gas-electric hybrid. His work quickly caught the eye of Germany's car design giants, and he began designing and driving new prototypes—even racing them to victory.

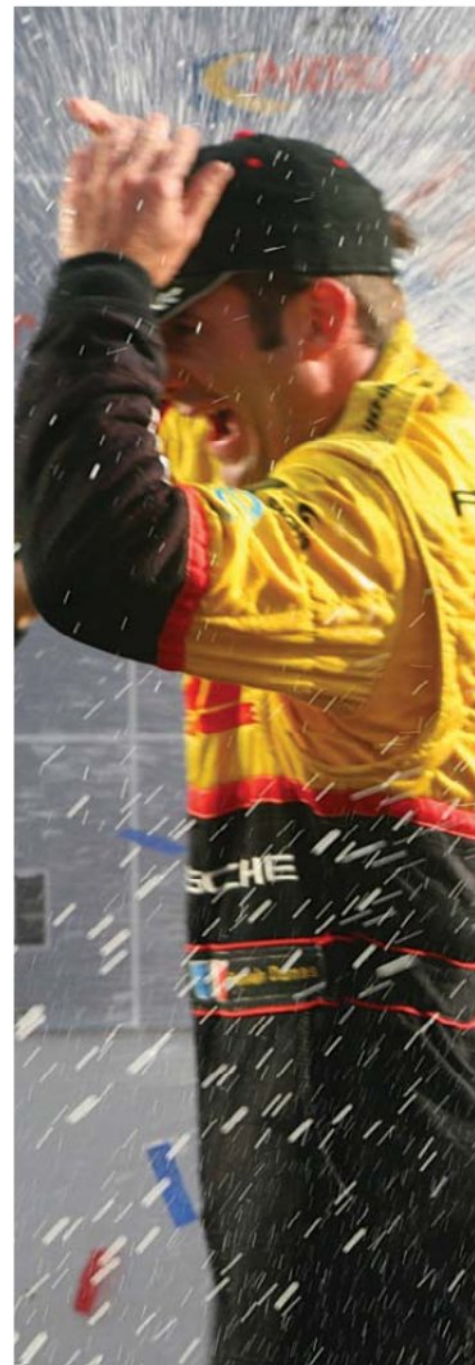
By 1948, Porsche was running a bustling business. His son and namesake designed the first car to bear the family name, and the initial 50 of them were built in a sawmill by hand. That same car, the Porsche 356, known as "No. 1", was the one that Ferdinand Porsche's nephew, Herbert Kaes, raced on July 11, 1948, in Austria's

first postwar car competition. Kaes brought home a victory, beginning Porsche's decades-long winning streak and marking an auspicious start to the company's dominance in the second half of the 20th century. Porsche has since won the most prestigious road races in the world: the 24 hours of Daytona 20 times, the 12 hours of Sebring 17 times, and the 24 hours of Le Mans 16 times. Ferdinand Porsche's business is now booming.

A Perfect Pairing

What does it mean to win more than 28,000 victories in nearly 60 years? On average, someone somewhere in the world drives a Porsche across a finish line in first place every weekend. Around the winners' podium, exhilaration fills the air as a gleaming trophy is presented. And then another kind of trophy, a bottle, is shaken. That's when the champagne soars.

Why champagne? Like a race car, a fine bottle of champagne is a thing of beauty and some mystery. Though it's now the drink of choice for ultimate



How to Win: 60 Years of Porsche Racing

Porsche charges into first place at the grueling 1984 Paris-Dakar Rally.

Porsche sweeps to an overall victory in the 1994 world-famous Le Mans 24.

Again in 1998, Porsche claims an overall victory in the Le Mans 24.



REPORTER

RECIPE

Soupe à l'Oignon

(French Onion Soup)

SERVES 6

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4. Heat broiler with rack 6" from element. Arrange 6 heatproof bowls on a foil-lined sheet tray, divide onions and broth between bowls, and stir together. Place 2 baguette slices in each bowl; top each with about 1 cup gruyère and about 1/3 cup parmigiano. Broil until cheeses are browned and bubbly, 3–5 minutes. Serve immediately.

the bill arrived, Gainsbourg, in one of his moods, refused to pay. "Come, Monsieur Gainsbourg," beseeched the waiter. "Be nice." The singer pouted: "I don't feel like paying." Though Gainsbourg was a regular, the management was hardly prepared to forgive the tab. When a few gendarmes walked through the door, he finally relented, but only on the condition that the police officers sit down and dine with him. "Then the police drove him home in the back of their van," Rival says.

Despite a fierce attachment to the latest fashions, Parisians have always been loyal to their most enduring institutions—Brasserie Lipp, Les Deux Magots, Le Dôme, La Coupole. Au Pied de Cochon is no exception. It's the best-known all-night restaurant in Paris and probably the least stuffy of the city's old-time brasseries; it has been in continuous operation, 24 hours a day, since it opened, in 1947. Though its beau monde heyday ended in the 1970s, when Les Halles was paved over to make way for an underground shopping mall, it has preserved its reputation as a night owls' redoubt. A wee-hours visit to sample the restaurant's namesake pig's foot entrée or its famous onion soup remains obligatory for anyone who pines for bygone Paris.

MY MOST RECENT MEAL at Au Pied de Cochon, last winter, began at a shamefully early hour: that is, well before midnight. I arrived sometime after nine in the evening, hoping to recapture the magic of a previous visit, years before, when I'd had a memorable 5:00 A.M. "dinner" with friends after a boisterous night out. That time, I'd ordered the pied de cochon farci périgourdin, a boneless pig's foot stuffed with foie gras, which had seemed to me, at that pre-dawn moment, like the world's most decadent meal.

Everything looked more or less the same on my recent visit. Pig was still the dominant motif; likenesses of the animal were hidden in the restaurant's wall panels, etched into the façade of the bar, stitched into the carpet, and tucked away in vitrines along the stairs. Even the legs of the dining tables were shaped like pigs' feet, as were the handles of the restaurant's front doors. (The restaurant goes through some 85,000 real pigs' feet a year.) The dining room had begun to fill up, with big groups of out-

of-towners and couples on dates. I was led to my table, and the maitre d'—tall, debonair, prematurely gray—offered me a trou des Halles, the house cocktail of sparkling wine and crème de cassis, garnished with a sour cherry and named for the big hole in the ground that persisted for years while the market was being dismantled. I commented that the atmosphere seemed more subdued than on my last visit, but I was assured that the late crowd still gets as out of hand as ever, especially after rugby matches at the Stade de France, when fans flood in from the nearby subway station. The maitre d' told me he keeps a rugby schedule on hand so that he can anticipate the rush.

I began my meal with the celebrated French onion soup. In her 1989 book *Bistro Cooking*, Patricia Wells divulged the restaurant's hitherto secret recipe, which involved braising the onions in the oven and using chicken stock as the base. In recent years, the kitchen has reverted to the more customary beef stock, but I found the soup to be no less a restorative, drenched-in-cheese delight. The oysters, too, were top-notch. I ordered a half dozen, each of a different kind, and all arrived fat and briny and coddled in ice.

Hoping to reprise my inaugural pig's foot experience from years earlier, I ordered as my main course what seemed a similarly indulgent choice: the tentation de Saint Antoine, named for the patron saint of butchers. A combination plate of the pig's snout, ear, tail, and trotter, roasted and served with a side of french fries, the dish was brought to my table on a copper-domed platter. To my disappointment, I found it to be more gimmick than gourmet; the pork parts were chewy and gristly, and the fries were soggy.

But then, for regulars, not the tourists who populate the place at the conventional lunch and dinner hours, food has never ranked high among the reasons for dining at Au Pied de Cochon. Indeed, if you've been eating here for decades, the charm of the place is about much more than what comes out of the kitchen. Sitting next to me at dinner as I considered dessert were an elderly couple celebrating their anniversary at the restaurant for the 59th time. Or was it the 60th? "The first time we ate here was 1948," said the elegantly dressed gentleman.

Every weekend, someone somewhere in the world drives a Porsche across a finish line in first place. Whenever that happens, the crowd roars

Porsche knows how to win—and how to celebrate. After hurtling across the finish line, triumphant drivers drench crowds of fans and the press with bottles of champagne before tasting it themselves. No victory is complete without that ritual.

Just as makers of fine wines do, Porsche knows that success is more than a magnificent sport; it is a feat of engineering. The legacy of one of the world's top luxury brands stems from founding father Dr. Ferdinand Porsche's innovative automotive designs and his passion for high-performance vehicles. Neither over- nor under-engineered, the company's renowned machines take the world's toughest racing courses in stride. Rounding hairpin turns, climbing treacherous mountain passes, or outlasting their competition in 24-hour races, like the Le Mans and Daytona, Porsche's race cars are a testament to the maker's ingenuity. Although Ferdinand Porsche's cars have, from the beginning, been built for racing, they

have always been reliable enough to be driven off the track and at home—which, even today, is a quality that very few other automakers can claim. That is why, in the eyes of many, Porsche leads the field of motor sports.

Like many great companies, Porsche begins with a family story, in this case with the singular vision of engineer Ferdinand Porsche. Apprenticed to his father as a plumber at an early age, Porsche fell head over heels for automobiles. By the age of 25, he had developed the world's first gas-electric hybrid. His work quickly caught the eye of Germany's car design giants, and he began designing and driving new prototypes—even racing them to victory.

By 1948, Porsche was running a bustling business. His son and namesake designed the first car to bear the family name, and the initial 50 of them were built in a sawmill by hand. That same car, the Porsche 356, known as "No. 1", was the one that Ferdinand Porsche's nephew, Herbert Kaes, raced on July 11, 1948, in Austria's

first postwar car competition. Kaes brought home a victory, beginning Porsche's decades-long winning streak and marking an auspicious start to the company's dominance in the second half of the 20th century. Porsche has since won the most prestigious road races in the world: the 24 hours of Daytona 20 times, the 12 hours of Sebring 17 times, and the 24 hours of Le Mans 16 times. Ferdinand Porsche's business is now booming.

A Perfect Pairing

What does it mean to win more than 28,000 victories in nearly 60 years? On average, someone somewhere in the world drives a Porsche across a finish line in first place every weekend. Around the winners' podium, exhilaration fills the air as a gleaming trophy is presented. And then another kind of trophy, a bottle, is shaken. That's when the champagne soars.

Why champagne? Like a race car, a fine bottle of champagne is a thing of beauty and some mystery. Though it's now the drink of choice for ultimate



How to Win: 60 Years of Porsche Racing

Porsche charges into first place at the grueling 1984 Paris-Dakar Rally.

Porsche sweeps to an overall victory in the 1994 world-famous Le Mans 24.

Again in 1998, Porsche claims an overall victory in the Le Mans 24.





Not slowed by snow, Porsche wins first and second place at the 1970 Monte Carlo Rally.



Porsche takes first, second, and third place in the 1968 24-hour Daytona race.



Porsche tests the bi-turbo engine in the sands at the 1985 Pharaoh Rally in Egypt.



Porsche credits its consistent record of victory to its commitment to safety and environmentalism, its dedicated pursuit of superior design, and a little something extra it calls "fascination"

celebrations, champagne has ancient, sacred origins. Before the fifth century A.D., monks tended churchyard grapevines in the Champagne region of France. When bishop Saint Rémi converted King Clovis, now considered the father of France, to Christianity in 496 A.D., it wasn't water he used for anointing the leader but the local wine. The act was pivotal in the history of the country and established the region's reputation as the source of the divine liquid.

During the pre-automotive era of sailing ships and horse-drawn carriages, the wines of Champagne were given as gifts between kings and other luminaries of Europe. Napoleon himself legendarily said, "I drink champagne when I win, to celebrate." Like most luxury items, Champagne wine was mostly the preserve of nobility. It wasn't until the 1800s that the science of carbonation and corking came into its own and commercial bottles were produced and made accessible to ordinary people. And, truly, everyone began to celebrate. Even the victorious revolutionaries of the original Bastille Day, in

1789, toasted with the bubbly stuff.

Winemakers benefited from champagne's royal history, touting it as a drink for seekers of status, who happened to be growing in number as the middle classes flourished in industrialized nations. Offered at the signing of treaties, dashed against ships on their maiden voyages, and imbibed to mark unions of the romantic sort, champagne continued to benefit; millions of bottles of it had been sold annually by the turn of the 20th century. Champagne won and maintained a reputation for offering the only right way to celebrate an important occasion.

Knowing that, Porsche drivers have always gone for the bubbly gold. At the first pre-World War II French Grand Prix, near France's Champagne region, 100 bottles of champagne were awarded to the front-runners of the qualifying sessions, as well as to the champion of the race. Thereafter, the victors received champagne and toasted straight from the bottle. The ceremony's

ante was upped when the winner of the 1967 Le Mans race shared his victory champagne by shaking and spraying it. The crowd roared, and a tradition was born.

The Road Ahead

It takes a lot of champagne to celebrate all the races that Porsche now wins. In just one week of October 2007, the German automaker's prize 911 car won 45 competitions worldwide. From the French SPA to the Sonoma County racetracks, champagne is reigning and pouring at countless victory parties for Porsche's fleet of winning autos.

A glimpse of one of the 911 models—or any other of the low-slung beauties—invariably provides a thrill. There's something ineffable about the cars' curves and their promise of acceleration. So, when the dust settles after one of them has roared around a bend, it's off to the finish line—and to the party.

It's hard not to wonder after you've witnessed win after win what is responsible for Porsche's consistent record

of victory. In answer to the question, the company, which is still owned by members of the Porsche family, points to its commitment to safety and environmentalism, the dedicated pursuit of superior design, and a little something extra it calls "fascination". Given that degree of dedication, it's no wonder that two-thirds of all Porsches ever built are still on the road.

Porsche now gets a chance to say, as Dom Pérignon himself is said to have upon first tasting champagne, "I am drinking the stars!" With a working farm at its Leipzig production plant, the company believes in sustaining the whole ecosystem of its production, building a strong and loyal workforce by investing in jobs rather than cutting them. It believes in joining forces not just with its employees but with its communities: customers, fans, and business partners. It believes that life must flourish along with business.

For a visionary company on a day of historic achievement, we pop the cork and raise a glass. Cheers!

Romain Dumas kisses his Spyder after a 1-2-3 Porsche finish at the 2007 Long Beach race.

The 550 Spyder takes first place in its class at the 1954 Carrera Panamericana.

Ferdinand "Ferry" Porsche in 1994, on his 85th birthday, in Porsche 356, "No. 1".



REPORTER

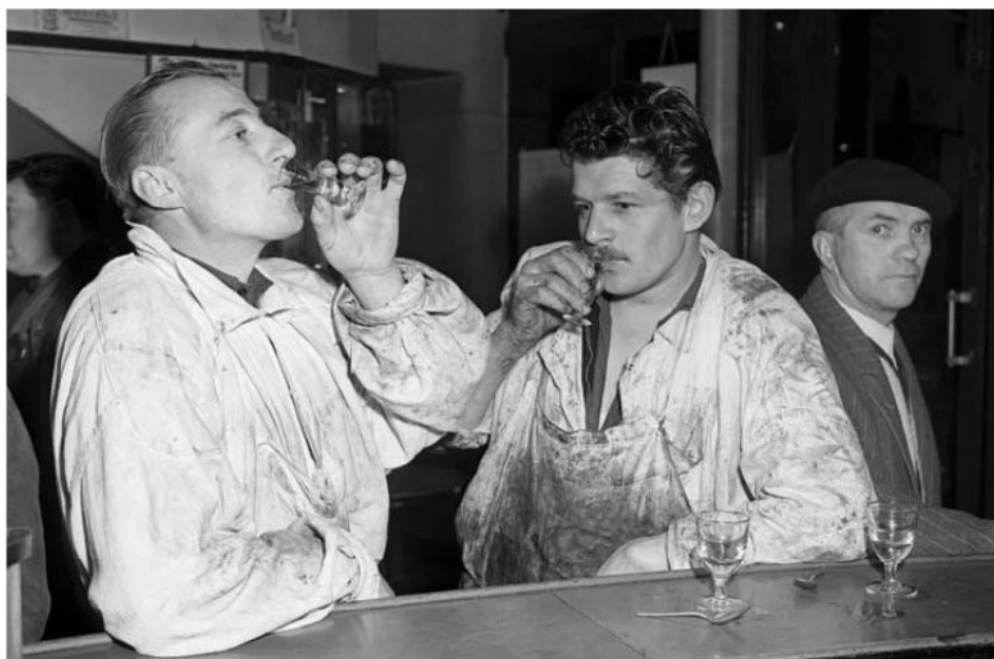
"No," insisted his wife. "Don't you remember? It was 1947."

IT WAS AT THE BEGINNING of that year that Clément Blanc, a successful meat merchant, turned what had been a no-frills bar across from Les Halles into a full-service brasserie. By the mid-1950s his gamble had become the hottest spot in town, attracting politicians, actors, artists, and athletes. Soon, Au Pied de Cochon had its own popular ditty ("At Pied de Cochon, day and night we find ourselves"), sung by rowdy late-night patrons, and its own live mascot, a baby pig named Oscar, who lived in a pen in front of the restaurant.

"We used to walk Oscar like a dog, like a little dog," recalls Jose Surreira, a Portuguese-born oyster shucker who has worked at the restaurant's raw bar for the past 30 years. "At three in the morning the butchers would come to dine, and Oscar would put his feet on the table, like he was waiting for them." Paraded through the dining room by the owner, Oscar subsisted on handouts from guests. "He ate a lot," says Surreira. "When he got fat, we took him to the butcher, and they gave us another little one, two or three months old." Eventually Oscar, in his many incarnations, attracted the attention of one particularly famous patron, the actress turned animal rights crusader Brigitte Bardot, who declared that the pig—which Monsieur Blanc allegedly kept up all night long in order to entertain guests—was being mistreated. The management retired Oscar, of its own accord, in the 1980s.

By then, Clément Blanc had ceded control of the business to his sons Pierre and Jacques. Faced with the disappearance of Les Halles, the brothers diversified, acquiring a historic brasserie near the Opéra, another on the Champs Élysées, and, within a few years, several more restaurants, whose success allowed the brothers to hold on to Au Pied de Cochon as the jewel in the crown of their expanding empire.

By the time the Blancs sold Au Pied de Cochon and their other properties to a French financial-services company in 2005, they had amassed one of the largest privately held groups of restaurants in Paris. Today, Au Pied de Cochon, in what could only be described as an American-style transformation, has become as much



Workers from Les Halles, Paris's late, lamented wholesale market, at the bar of Au Pied de Cochon in the 1950s, top; above, the brasserie's façade, which faced the market, during the same era.

a brand as a place. The company that owns the original brasserie now also owns an Au Pied de Cochon in Atlanta and another in Mexico City. A third is planned for Miami. (None of these restaurants is affiliated with the celebrated Au Pied de Cochon restaurant in Montreal.)

That so little seems to have changed inside the original restaurant is a testament to its resilience and to Parisians' potent sense of nostalgia. Across from the pedestrian

walkways and souvenir shops that have replaced the market stalls of Les Halles, the brasserie's neon sign still glows like a beacon to hungry passers-by. As winter sets in, Au Pied de Cochon's management and staff are hunkering down for the feast-packed holiday season, their busiest time of the year. It's as good a time as any to find a cozy booth, order a bottle of the house beaujolais and a platter of oysters, and "remake the world" until the early morning hours. 

SOURCE

Instant Cheer

Spice-infused printen are an enduring holiday tradition

BY GRACE YOUNG

MY MOST VIVID MEMORY FROM the first trip I made to Aachen, the picturesque town in the far west of Germany where my husband grew up, is of shopwindows and bakery display cases stocked with row upon row of the dense, gingerbread-like cookies known as printen. Some were covered in chocolate or studded with hazelnuts; others were coated in a light but luscious-looking sugar glaze and arrayed beautifully in wooden boxes or wicker baskets. My husband bought me a bag of them, and I relished the cookies' subtle sweetness, which sparkled with the flavors of cloves, anise, cardamom, and citrus. It was Christmastime, and I could think of no single food that more perfectly captured the city's holiday spirit.

Printen, my husband told me, are a specialty of Aachen and a popular holiday gift throughout Germany. I later learned that the original recipe for printen—made from a dough of wheat flour, cane sugar, hazelnuts, candied orange peel, and ground spices that was pressed into carved wooden molds that produced the likenesses of saints—was likely developed in the nearby Belgian town of Dinant around 1620 and brought to Aachen shortly thereafter. But it was in Aachen that the formula for the dough, which contained no eggs, butter, or oil, was refined and perfected.

Aachen-style printen remained more or less unchanged until the Napoleonic Wars of the early 1800s, when a blockade prevented cane sugar from English colonies from reaching the city. Determined to continue making the cookies, bakers began to replace cane sugar with zuckerrüben sirup, a molasses made from beet sugar and crushed rock candy, which gave the printen a delicate, sugary crunchiness. This new dough tended to stick to the elaborate wooden molds, so bakers abandoned them in favor of simple cookie cutters, but that hardly diminished the popularity of printen among Aachen's residents: they liked the new version so much that bakers decided not to revert to the old recipes even after the blockade had been lifted.

The newer formula continues to be used today, though different bakers have developed their own, proprietary ingredients. My favorite printen are those made at Printenbäckerei Klein, an Aachen bakery run by Heinz Klein, whose recipe is a variation of his great-grandfather's. The shop sells a number of styles of the cookie, including the hard, biscuitlike kind, as well as softer versions and ones covered in chocolate. The cookies can be ordered directly from the store in bags of varying sizes and in boxed assortments (mail-order prices range from \$28 to \$75, not including shipping). To order, call Printenbäckerei Klein at 49/241-474-350 or visit www.printen.de (specify air shipping for maximum freshness). 🐾





Flavors of Puerto Rico

ON THIS CARIBBEAN ISLAND, THE FOOD IS AS COLORFUL AS THE LANDSCAPE

Puerto Rico is known for its sandy beaches, historic sites, exciting nightlife, and first-class resorts, but this island, located approximately 1,000 miles southeast of Florida, also boasts a rich food culture that brings together the flavors of the many peoples that have mingled on the island for centuries. From the basic dishes of the native Indians, based on indigenous foods like achote and cassava, Puerto Ricans have developed a rich creole cuisine that blends these flavors with those of the Spanish, English, French, and Dutch settlers who colonized the island and the African slaves they brought with them. In addition to new cooking techniques, these settlers brought their own foods with them, importing hundreds of species from Europe and their



Puerto Rico has a rich creole cuisine that blends native flavors of the island's

other countries around the world that flourished and became an integral part of the Puerto Rican landscape. These diverse elements, from mangoes and avocados to coffee, are essential to Puerto Rican cooking and culture.

Fragrant Coffees

With its high mountain ranges and tropical climate, Puerto Rico is an ideal location for coffee production and produces world-class beans. The island's western and central mountains provide a prime setting for coffee's cultivation, with a dense tropical forest, 60 to 100 inches of rainfall per year, and abundant sunshine that brings out the coffee's distinctively mellow flavor and rich, floral aromas. Since the mid-1700s, when coffee plants first proliferated on the island, several types of arabica beans have grown here, including limaní, caturra,

borbón, pacas, and frontón. Coffee is an essential part of Puerto Rican culture; it's consumed as *café con leche* (coffee with milk) in the morning and as *cortado* (a strong coffee served with sugar) after lunch and dinner. There are 104 different brands of coffee in Puerto Rico, including an increasing number of specialty coffees, labeled with a seal of authenticity by the Department of Agriculture, that are prized for their pristine beans and balanced flavors and aromas.

Tropical Fruits

Puerto Rico's climate is ideal for growing a wide variety of tropical fruits, from those indigenous to the island to the many varieties brought by settlers.

Mangoes are one of the most popular fruits on the island, with a total of 17 varieties produced locally. The most common is the large keitt, which has

dark green skin with a rosy blush, deep orange flesh, and a sweet, tangy flavor. Many residents grow their own mangoes in backyard gardens and eat them peeled and sliced, as a snack. Mangoes are also raised commercially; 15,600 tons are exported annually to markets in Europe and the United States.

Avocados are another popular and important element of Puerto Rican cuisine, finding their way into everyday dishes such as *pernil* (roasted pork) and sautéed steak with rice and beans and hearty seafood salads of *bacalao* (codfish) and *arenque* (smoked herring). Their smooth texture and taste complement the assertive flavors of these typical creole foods, which blend African, European and Taíno Indian ingredients to create spicy, hearty dishes. Puerto Rico produces many kinds of avocado, but



indigenous products with those brought by the European and African settlers

the heavy favorite is the collinson, an elliptical, smooth-skinned variety with a rich, nutlike flavor.

Oranges are also cultivated for local consumption. Though they are grown throughout the island, Puerto Ricans consider a small, sweet variety known locally as *china nativa*, from the country's central, mountainous region, the best. They are used in everything from *piraguas*, a sweet made from shaved ice and orange syrup, to desserts like *bizcocho de chinas*, a custardlike cake made with orange juice, eggs, and sugar.

Starchy fruits like plantains and chayote, or water pear, are abundant on the island and form the basis of many traditional Puerto Rican dishes. *Plátanos*, or green plantains, are cut, mashed, and fried into golden rounds called *tosones*, sprinkled with salt, and served

as a side dish. They are also pounded in a mortar along with garlic and pork rinds for *mofongo*, an aromatic dish of mashed plantains that is typically served in the vessel in which it was prepared as a main dish with a light broth on the side. Ripened plantains, known as *maduros*, are usually sliced lengthwise, fried, and served with a plate of white rice and juicy chicken fricassee or cooked in a fragrant tomato stew. Sweet and delicate, *maduros* can be layered in a meat casserole called *pastelón* or crafted into meat-filled pinwheels called *piononos*. Chayote, a light green, gourdlike fruit with a firm, mild flesh, is often boiled and served with meat or stuffed with

a fluffy mixture of vegetables, bread crumbs, and cheese.

Abundant Seafood

The waters surrounding Puerto Rico teem with dozens of varieties of fish and crustaceans, which play a large role in Puerto Rican cuisine. In coastal towns like Ponce, Cabo Rojo, and Aguadilla, locals visit the piers daily to purchase everything from mako shark to mackerel directly from fishermen. Around the main cities, Puerto Ricans often find their seafood at kioskos, small family-run businesses that sell fresh seafood salads and fritters. Locals are particularly fond of swordfish and cod, which they cook in tomato-based

Previous page, clockwise from top left: a colorful assortment of Puerto Rican mangoes and oranges; Paseo Tablado la Guancha at Ponce, Porta Caribe; San Felipe del Morro Fort. Above, far left: piononos, a dish made with plantains and stuffed with meat. Center: Nightlife in Arturo Somoano Plaza in Old San Juan. Right, clockwise from top left: a waterfall in Peñuelas, Porta Caribe; surfing at Playa Domes in the city of Rincón; avocados; folkloric dancers called vejigantes in carnival masks in Old San Juan.



Rum has been a major force in Puerto Rico since sugarcane was first planted

saucers, fry, bake, or serve *en escabeche*, marinated in onions and spices. Puerto Ricans also eat a wide variety of shellfish and are especially fond of crabmeat and shrimp, as well as octopus, which they use in salads with olives or peppers and onions or cook with rice prepared with tomatoes, onions, and garlic.

Classic Root Vegetables

Starchy root plants, known collectively as *vianda*, are central to Puerto Rican cuisine, from yellow calabaza (pumpkin) to white or purple yautía (which is similar to a sweet potato), long, fibrous yuca (cassava), and large, round malanga (which belongs to the same family as taro). These tubers, many of them native to the island, are often prepared very simply, boiled and served plain or

with oil and vinegar, as an accompaniment to dishes like *bacalao guisado* (stewed codfish). Considered great thickening agents, they are also frequently added to traditional soups such as *sancocho*, a soup made with beef, vegetables, plantains, and multiple kinds of *vianda*. They also often constitute the basis of more-elaborate local dishes, like *alcapurrias*, yuca dumplings stuffed either with meat, such as chicken or beef marinated in tomatoes, garlic, olives, and capers, or with seafood, like coconut-scented crabmeat or spicy shrimp. Yuca can also be turned into *masa harina* (flour) and used for making *pasteles*, the Puerto Rican version of tamales, filled with spiced beef or pork, raisins, and olives.

World-Class Rums

Sugarcane was one of the first crops imported to the island by the Spanish, in the 16th century, and rum has been a

major force in Puerto Rican development and politics since shortly thereafter. Today, Puerto Rico produces some of the world's best rum, renowned for its distinctive, dry flavor and smooth character, and exports it to the United States, where 70 percent of the rum available are from Puerto Rico. These rums run the gamut from crisp, light rum, used in mojitos and piña coladas, to mellow, dark rum, used in planter's punch and sangria, and premium anejo (aged rum), so rich and flavorful that it is drunk straight like a fine cognac or brandy. —Oswald Rivera, *author of Puerto Rican Cuisine in America: Nuyorican and Bodega Recipes* (Thunder's Mouth Press, 2002)

Above, from left: the beach at the Caribe Hilton in San Juan; a cup of café con leche.


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CLASSIC

Miracle Food

Latkes come in many forms, but sometimes the traditional one is the best

BY JOAN NATHAN

THE AUTHOR SOLEM Aleichem got it right when he wrote in the 1900 short story “Hanukkah Gelt”, “Can you guess, children, which is the best of all holidays? Hanukkah, of course.... You eat latkes every day.” These crisp potato pancakes have been a festive treat at Jewish tables since the mid-19th century, when the potato was becoming a widespread crop in Eastern Europe. Fried foods like latkes have long been favored during the eight days of Hanukkah because oil is considered symbolic of the miracle that is central to the holiday, which commemorates the Jews’ victory over the Syrian-Greeks in 164 B.C. and the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem. According to Jewish scripture, a single day’s worth of oil kept the temple’s sacred lamp lit for eight days.

The basic original recipe for latkes—grated potatoes formed into small cakes and fried—was similar to ones popular at the time among gentiles in Eastern Europe during the Christmas season. The Yiddish word *latke* most likely derives from the Ukrainian *oladok*, for pancake. These words are related to the Greek word *eladion*, “little oily thing”, which in turn comes from *elaion*, Greek for olive oil, the primary cooking oil of ancient Jews. Since olive oil wasn’t commonplace in their diet, Eastern European Jews usually fried their latkes in goose fat. Here in the United States, where latkes arrived with Jewish immigrants in the late 19th century, they are most often cooked in vegetable oil.

Every latke lover has strong opinions about the best way to prepare the dish. Some argue for using a food processor to grate the potatoes; others insist on hand-grating them and proudly flaunting scraped knuckles. Most agree that a condiment is called for to provide a counterpoint to the dish’s distinctive, crunchy-soft texture: typically, sour cream, applesauce, or, sometimes, a sprinkle of sugar, though

I’ve seen latkes garnished with caviar, crème fraîche, or smoked salmon. Many contemporary cooks enhance the classic potato version by adding grated celery root, apple, zucchini, beets, or acorn squash to the mix, and I’ve eaten one seasoned with garam masala, the piquant Indian spice mix. Latkes also come in many sizes, from the one-bite cocktail party kind to versions like the brittle, paper-thin one, wide as a dinner plate, that I ate years ago in a tiny



restaurant in the Ardèche region of France.

In my own kitchen, I remain a purist. I make medium-size latkes by coarsely grating a reasonably starchy potato like russet or yukon gold and adding a little matzo meal or some bread crumbs, as well as egg, to help hold the pancakes together. Then I gently fry them in vegetable oil until they’re crisp on the edges and pliant in the middle. Finally, I carry them to the table with some homemade applesauce and watch them disappear. 🍴

RECIPE

Latkes

(Potato Pancakes)

SERVES 6

Joan Nathan likes her latkes with applesauce; we find them equally delectable with sour cream. Alternating between onion and potatoes when grating keeps the potatoes from darkening.

- 1 medium yellow onion
- 3 large yukon gold potatoes (about 2½ lbs.), peeled
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 6 tbsp. finely chopped chives
- 3 tbsp. plain matzo meal
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- Freshly ground white pepper, to taste
- Canola oil for frying
- Sour cream or applesauce

1. Working over a bowl, grate some of the onion, followed by some of the potatoes, on the large-hole side of a box grater. Repeat until all the vegetables are used up.

2. Sprinkle mixture with salt and transfer it to a sieve set over a bowl. Squeeze out as much liquid as possible from mixture, allowing it to collect in bottom of bowl. Transfer mixture to another bowl and cover surface with plastic wrap; set aside. Set reserved potato liquid aside to let the milky white starch settle. Pour off liquid from starch. Transfer starch to mixture along with the chives, matzo, eggs, and salt and pepper. Gently mix.

3. Pour enough oil into a skillet that it reaches a depth of ¼"; heat over medium-high heat. Working in small batches, form mixture into balls, using about ¼ cup of the mixture for each, and place them in the oil. Flatten each ball gently with a spatula to form 3"-4" pancakes. Fry, turning once, until golden brown, crisp, and cooked through, about 8 minutes. Transfer the pancakes to a paper towel-lined plate to drain. Serve the potato pancakes with sour cream or applesauce.

Some derive satisfaction from their work.
Others, from their commute.



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A NIGHT IN BERLIN

The energy of this graceful city brightens a Christmas feast among old friends

BY URSULA HEINZELMANN PHOTOGRAPHS BY BEN FINK



BERLIN

IT SEEMS APPROPRIATE THAT BERLIN, the city I grew up in, is the object of the first toast of the evening on this Christmas Eve, which I am spending with my husband, my mother, and a few of my fellow Berliners in a friend's cozy apartment in Wilmersdorf, a neighborhood in the western part of the city. Though my work as a culinary journalist has taken me to other parts of Germany for years at a time, I have never been able to stay away from Berlin for long. This tough, beautiful, free-spirited, and dramatically transformed city is an intrinsic part of who I am.

Not coincidentally, the champagne in our glasses is a Lanson Gold Label Brut from 1989, the year the distinction between East Berlin and West Berlin began to dissolve. Even in a cosmopolitan city that is feverishly re-inventing itself day by day, 1989 still seems like a wonder to us. Tonight's meal, which includes oysters, duck, venison, a variety of side dishes both innovative and traditional, and more wines than I can count, is a sort of ode to both the old and the new faces of my hometown. We clink our glasses amid the glow of candles and Christmas tree lights. "To Berlin," we say. "Frohe Weihnachten!" Merry Christmas!

MY PREPARATIONS FOR the holiday feast began days ago. Planning is everything when you're getting ready for a Christmas dinner in Berlin, where most stores close on the days immediately surrounding the holiday, a situation that occasions a mad rush at butcher counters, produce markets, fishmongers, and bakeries all over town. Indeed, Berliners embrace the holiday season with a special fervor, adding to the intensity by packing their schedules with cocktail parties, dinners, and plays or concerts. My own pre-Christmas week was a social whirlwind, and by the time I got up early on the 23rd and left my apartment in Mitte, the historical center of Berlin, to begin my errands, I

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RECIPE

Rübchen mit Entenschenkeln Geschmort

(Braised Duck Legs with Rutabagas)

SERVES 6-8

We found sweet, firm rutabagas, not regular turnips, to be the best substitute for the spicy, hard-to-find German teltow turnips that the author usually uses for this dish.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 6 sprigs flat-leaf parsley | 2 small yellow onions, cut into wedges |
| 6 sprigs thyme | 3 cups chicken stock |
| 2 fresh bay leaves | 3 cups riesling or gewürztraminer |
| 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil | 2 tsp. whole allspice |
| 6 whole duck legs, each halved at the joint and frenched | 4 lbs. rutabagas, peeled and cut into 2" chunks |
| Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste | 2 tbsp. cornstarch |
| 6 cloves garlic, finely chopped | |

1. Heat oven to 325°. Tie parsley, thyme, and bay leaves together with kitchen twine to make a bouquet garni (see page 94); set aside. Heat oil in a pot over medium-high heat. Season duck with salt and pepper. Add half the duck and brown, turning once, 12-14 minutes. Transfer duck to a plate; discard all but 1 tbsp. fat. Repeat with remaining duck; discard all but 3 tbsp. fat.

2. Reduce heat to medium; add garlic and onions; cook until caramelized, 12-15 minutes. Add stock and wine; cook for 2 minutes. Return duck to pot with bouquet garni, allspice, rutabagas, and salt and pepper; bring to a boil. Transfer to oven; cook, covered, for 1 hour. Uncover; cook until liquid is reduced and rutabagas are tender, 25-30 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer duck and rutabagas to a plate. Whisk together 1/3 cup cooking liquid and cornstarch. Bring remaining liquid to a boil, whisk in cornstarch mixture, and simmer until thickened, 2-3 minutes. Return duck and rutabagas to pot and serve.



Above, from left, the French Dome, on Gendarmenmarkt square; teltow turnips at the Karl-August-Platz farmers' market; Werner Blanck and the author, Ursula Heinzelmann, at Blanck's wine shop, Enoteca Blanck & Weber. Facing page, the Weihnachts Zauber, or Christmas bazaar, at Gendarmenmarkt square. Previous pages, from left, braised duck legs with rutabagas; the author's husband, Stuart Pigott, opening one of the many bottles he brought to Christmas dinner.







Above, from left, the author's mother, Heiderose Müller, tasting her mohnpielen, a traditional dessert, originally from Silesia (a region that's now part of Poland), made of bread soaked in hot milk with sugar, raisins, poppy seeds, and rum; a small park in central Berlin. Facing page, gratinéed oysters with sauerkraut.

was wondering whether I'd have the energy get my shopping done.

I've often attributed Berliners' passion for merrymaking during the holidays to the deprivations the city dwellers have had to endure over the centuries. The landlocked region in which Berlin is situated is drier and hotter in the summer and colder and wetter in the winter than the rest of Germany, and the soils of the surrounding farmlands are comparatively poor. Add to those factors a long history of wars, financial crises, and cold war stagnation, and you have a people who, though often brusque on first meeting, really know how to celebrate. It's a spirit that outsiders often associate with the musical *Cabaret* and other colorful histories from the city's "decadent" era in the 1920s.

The likes of Sally Bowles and the fabled Kit Kat Club may be gone, but Berlin's early-20th-century gaiety has, after decades of upheaval and division, given way to a new and more inclusive joie de vivre, which is nowhere more evident than in the ways Berliners eat, drink, and shop. In the years between the wars, the city was characterized by huge, opulent restaurants and amusement palaces like the now defunct Haus Vaterland and massive department stores selling wares that were out of reach for much of the city's impoverished populace. Today, by contrast, Berlin's streetscape features all manner of restaurants offering every imaginable cuisine—Japanese and Thai are consistently popular these days—as well as neighborhood markets and boutiques catering to a clientele that is increasingly conscious of where their food comes from.

In terms of shopping, I was luckier than most this year. I didn't have to worry about the wines, which my husband, Stuart Pigott, a wine journalist, would be taking care of. And the main course, wild venison, was sent to me directly from an avid hunter I know in the Palatinate region of Germany. My first stop on the day before the feast was the farmers' market on Karl-August-Platz, west of the city's center. In the dim gray of early morning, I sought out teltow turnips, the coveted tubers, from the region of the same name south of Berlin, that Goethe raved about in his letters to the composer Carl Friedrich Zelter. I found a stall selling them and bought a few pounds, as well as some red cabbage and kale. I considered myself lucky: a resurgence of interest in regional produce on the part of Berliners in recent years has rejuvenated the city's farmers' markets, but it also means that prized items like teltow turnips disappear fast.

My next stop was Rogacki, a Charlottenburg delicatessen that has become a Berlin institution. It was still early, but I arrived to find customers already queued up alongside the refrigerated cases (*continued on page 58*)

RECIPE

Gratinierte Austern auf Sauerkraut

(Gratinéed Oysters with Sauerkraut)

SERVES 6-8

The sauerkraut in this elegant appetizer, a Berlin twist on oysters florentine, lends the dish a pleasing acidity that complements good champagne.

2 cups coarse sea salt	1/2 lb. sauerkraut, rinsed and drained
16 large oysters, such as wellfleet, bluepoint, or apalachicola	Kosher salt and freshly ground white pepper, to taste
5 tbsp. butter	3/4 cup heavy cream
1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped	1 tbsp. dry vermouth
3/4 cup dry white wine	1 egg yolk
	Pinch of cayenne

1. Spread sea salt on a large baking sheet. Open oysters over a cheesecloth-lined sieve over a bowl to collect oysters' liquor. Remove oysters and chill. Discard flat top shells. Wash bottom shells and place on sheet; set aside.

2. Heat 3 tbsp. of the butter in a pot over medium heat. Add half the onions and cook until softened, 5-7 minutes. Add 1/2 cup of the wine, sauerkraut, and salt and pepper; boil. Reduce heat to medium; simmer, partially covered, 8-10 minutes. Drain the sauerkraut mixture and set aside.

3. Heat remaining butter in a pot over medium heat. Add remaining onions; cook until softened, 5-7 minutes. Add oyster liquor, remaining wine, 1/2 cup cream, and vermouth and bring to a boil. Lower heat to medium-low; reduce by half, about 20 minutes. Remove from heat; whisk in egg yolk and remaining cream. Add cayenne and season with salt and pepper. Set sauce aside.

4. Heat broiler with rack 4" from element. Divide sauerkraut between shells; top each with an oyster. Spoon some sauce over each and broil until light golden brown, about 5 minutes.



A Yuletide toast kicks off the Christmas feast at Werner Blanck's apartment, above. Facing page, left to right, top to bottom, Stuart Pigott with an illuminating gift; Werner Blanck and friend Petra Karadzic trimming the tree; a copy of one of Pigott's books; stollen, an Advent-season cake (on top), and mohnkuchen, a poppy-seed cake; a few of the evening's wines; hostess Vera Blanck, also known as Werner; Petra Karadzic setting the table; Weihnachtsmann (Father Christmas); adding rum to the mohnpielen.



BERLIN

(continued from page 55) lined with smoked and fresh fish. Having placed my order days in advance, I pushed my way through the crowd to a pickup station at the back of the shop. As the woman behind the counter handed me my smoked trout, oysters, and duck legs, she smiled wearily. "We have almost a thousand orders prepared out there!" she said. "We were up until three o'clock this morning to get it all ready!"

WHEN I ARRIVE AT THE apartment of my friend Werner Blanck, who will be hosting Christmas dinner, at midday on the 24th, my mother and our friend Petra Karadzic, a travel agent, are already there, helping to put up holiday decorations and set the table. Werner, who owns the wine shop adjacent to the apartment, is dressed in a sweater and trousers, but before night falls, he will don a ladies' blond wig and makeup and become Vera, the elegant woman whom we have come to know and love as the truest incarnation of this old friend. Indeed, we all usually refer to Werner as Vera regardless of the time of day.

While Vera fits the Christmas tree into its stand and Petra and my mother polish glasses, I start shredding the red cabbage for the rotkohl, a traditional accompaniment to venison. Next, I clean and chop the turnips and start making the kale salad that will go with the trout. When Vera peeks in and sees that I'm preparing grünkohl, as kale is called, she looks crestfallen. "Grünkohl for Christmas?" she says, "I don't like the stuff. It's really only an excuse to drink schnapps." But when I explain that I'm not cooking the leaves in the traditional way—that is, with lots of pork fat until they're soggy—and instead am blanching them and serving them with a mustard vinaigrette, she seems mollified. My updated but simple preparation of this traditional German food reflects what seems to be a citywide trend both among home cooks and on the part of chefs, who have begun to answer a demand for unpretentious, ingredient-driven seasonal fare.

Finally, I turn to the beautiful, five-pound venison loin, seasoning it with salt and pepper and trimming away any excess fat and cartilage. The

RECIPE

Rotkohl

(Braised Red Cabbage with Bacon)

SERVES 6-8

The secret to cooking this dish, a classic German accompaniment to a hearty meat course, is in keeping the pot covered, which helps preserve the cabbage's deep, purple hue.

- 6 slices bacon, roughly chopped
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- 1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 large granny smith apple, peeled, cored, and coarsely chopped
- 1/3 cup port
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 large head red cabbage (about 3 lbs.), cored and finely shredded
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 1/4 cup red currant jelly

1. Cook bacon in a large wide pot over medium-high heat until just crisp, about 5 minutes. Add sugar and cook, stirring constantly, for 30 seconds more. Add onions and salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are golden and soft, about 10 minutes. Stir in apples, reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and cook until tender, 6-8 minutes.

2. Add port, vinegar, and cabbage to the onion-apple mixture; stir to combine. Cover the pot and cook until cabbage is bright purple and slightly wilted, 5-7 minutes. Add stock and salt and pepper. Increase heat to medium-high and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and cook until cabbage is tender but still red, about 1 1/4 hours. Stir in red currant jelly, season with more salt and pepper, and cook briefly, 4-5 minutes more.



Above, from left, dinner gets under way at Werner Blanck's apartment, in the Wilmsdorf neighborhood, west of Berlin's historic center; braised red cabbage with bacon, a favorite German side dish for roasts; guest Peter Klann, who owns a bakery in Berlin, tasting one of the evening's wines, a riesling from Germany's Nahe region, with girlfriend Miriam Alvaranga. Facing page, sweet red wine jelly with whipped cream, one of two desserts that cap off the evening.



BERLIN

readying of the meal's first course—oysters placed atop a bed of sauerkraut and quickly broiled on the half shell with wine-and-cream sauce—will wait until just before the meal. I head back to my apartment to collect Stuart and freshen up for dinner.

"I NEVER WOULD HAVE THOUGHT sauerkraut would go so well with champagne!" says Petra, as she eats one of the oysters. It's seven o'clock; the tree has been trimmed, the cooking is done, and the party has begun. Eight of us are gathered snugly around Vera's dining table: Petra and my mother; Stuart and I; our friend Roy Metzdorf, who owns one of my favorite Berlin wine bars; another friend, Peter Klann, who is a baker, and his girlfriend, Miriam Alvaranga; and Vera, who looks radiant and wholly in her element in a black-and-red silk blouse.

As I clear away the oyster platter and the champagne flutes, Peter produces a large bag of olive oil—and-herb crostini—a big seller at the bakery he owns in Kreuzberg, a bohemian neighborhood that encompasses what used to be the East–West crossing point known as Checkpoint Charlie. Before anyone can fill up on those, the smoked trout and kale arrive, followed by the duck legs braised with the teltow turnips, which melt in my mouth and have an almost horseradishy spiciness that complements the fragrant gewürztraminer Stuart has brought to the table for this course. My husband has planned the meal's wine selections carefully, but Roy, an oenophile with a prodigious thirst, keeps pulling other bottles from his backpack for us to try. By the time the venison is ready, I've lost track of what wine goes with what dish, but I still manage to carve the luscious, medium-rare meat, arrange it on the plates, and serve it without any trouble.

The dessert detail falls to my mother, who, in observance of a longstanding tradition in my family, has made mohnpielen, a simple confection of bread pieces soaked in hot milk and mixed with sugar, raisins, poppy seeds, and rum. There's also a silky gelatin dessert made with red wine and served with whipped cream. We pass the sweets around and open presents, pausing now and then to raise our glasses for yet another toast. I gaze fondly around Vera's apartment and think of other Berliners enjoying their own holiday repasts all across this now undivided city. As we finish, Stuart fetches one last bottle of wine, a riesling from the Nahe region of Germany. Like the champagne, it's a 1989, and nothing has ever tasted sweeter. 🍷

SAVEUR.COM: *A recipe for mohnpielen.*

IN THE SAVEUR KITCHEN, *page 94: All about bouquet garni.*

THE PANTRY, *page 100: A source for gelatin sheets; more places to eat and shop at in Berlin.*

METHOD

Rotweingelee mit Schlagsahne

(Sweet Red Wine Jelly with Whipped Cream)

Author Heinzelmann recommends using lambrusco to make this sweet dessert, but any non-oaked, fruit-driven red wine will do. Put three and a half 3-gram gelatin sheets (see page 100) into a bowl of cold water; let soften, about 30 seconds. Squeeze out water; transfer to a small pot with $1\frac{2}{3}$ cups red wine, 3 tbsp. sugar, and 1 whole star anise. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until gelatin and sugar are completely dissolved, about 3 minutes. Strain through a fine sieve into a bowl; stir in $\frac{2}{3}$ cup red wine. Divide mixture between 6 wineglasses; chill until set, about 4 hours. When ready to serve, whip $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cold heavy cream to soft peaks. Dollop the cream into each glass; top each with a whole star anise. Serve immediately. Serves 6.

THE GUIDE

BERLIN

Dinner with drinks and tip:

EXPENSIVE Over \$100 MODERATE \$21–\$99

INEXPENSIVE Under \$20

WHERE TO STAY

HOTEL HACKESCHER

MARKT *Große Präsidentenstraße 8 (49/30-28-0030). Double: \$212–\$304.* This boutique hotel in the heart of what used to be East Berlin lies within walking distance of Museum Island, the city's showpiece cultural complex.

SOFITEL BERLIN GENDARM-

ENMARKT *Charlottenstraße 50-52 (49/30-203-750; www.accorhotels.com, hotel code 5342). Double: \$280.* This well-appointed, full-service hotel sits opposite the French Dome on Berlin's stately Gendarmenmarkt square.

RESTAURANT 44 IM SWISS-

ÖTEL *Augsburger Straße 44 (49/30-220-102-288; www.restaurant-44.de). Expensive.* Few places better represent the sleek urbanity of present-day Berlin than chef Tim Raue's Michelin-starred restaurant, in the bustling Kurfürstendamm district. Elegant fusion dishes like breast of beef in cacao are Raue's specialty.

WEINSTEIN *Lychener Straße 33*

(49/30-441-1842). Moderate. The unassuming façade and rustic wood tables of restaurateur Roy Metzdorf's wine bar, in trendy Prenzlauer Berg, belies a sophisticated menu, featuring locally sourced produce, as well as a remarkable wine list.

WHERE TO EAT

KURPFALZ-WEINSTUBEN

Wilmsdorfer Straße 93 (49/30-883-6664). Inexpensive. Many Berliners consider the saumagen (a rustic sausage dish) served at this traditional German restaurant in Charlottenburg to be the city's finest. An extensive wine list highlights virtually all of Germany's 13 winemaking regions.

WHAT TO DO

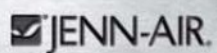
ROGACKI *Wilmsdorfer Straße*

145/6 (49/30-343-8250; www.rogacki.de). This venerated, 79-year-old delicatessen sells a huge variety of high-quality fresh and prepared foods, from fried meatballs and wiener schnitzel to eisbein (slow-cooked ham hock) and smoked fish.





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New York sources for authentic ingredients and kitchen supplies

There's no better place to shop for food than New York, where the goods are as colorful and varied as the people who live there and new products arrive every day from all over the world. Food emporiums and hole-in-the-wall markets offer everything from basic ingredients to the finest imported specialties, as well as a home cook's dream selection of cookware. Here are a dozen of our favorite places to visit.

Astor Wines and Spirits Boasting over 3,000 bottles from just about everywhere, Astor Wines and Spirits sells countless organic, sparkling, and kosher wines; myriad liquors; and the largest selection of artisanal sakes in the city. Its staff members are renowned for their impressive knowledge and accessibility, making even beginner wine drinkers comfortable amid the exhaustive offerings. The store holds daily tastings at its bar and displays helpful notes on each wine that it carries. **399 Lafayette Street; 212/674-7500; www.astorwines.com.**

Broadway Panhandler This go-to spot for adventurous home cooks has all the tools necessary for serious cooking, from standard pressure cookers and food processors to Japanese mandolines. Vibrantly colored Le Creuset teakettles and casserole dishes line the shelves next to a wide range of specialty tools, like pineapple slicers, 12-quart mixing bowls, and pastry scrapers. Handsome Wüsthof and Shun knives are displayed behind a staffed knife counter. **65 East Eighth Street; 212/966-3434; www.broadwaypanhandler.com.**

Dean & DeLuca A SoHo fixture, Dean & DeLuca is the ultimate specialty food shop, a treasure trove of imported foods, exotic fruit and vegetables, and beautiful cheeses and charcuterie. The store is crowded daily with jet-setter SoHo residents stocking up on fresh seafood, like live tricolor scallops and Alaskan king crab, breads from the city's best bakeries, and high-end prepared foods, like butternut squash with pecans and marinated skirt steak. Visitors to the city browse the stunning tarts and cakes in the baked-goods cases and grab custom-made sushi rolls and organic chocolates to fuel their afternoons in the nearby boutiques and galleries. **560 Broadway; 212/226-6800; www.deandeluca.com.**

Dynasty Supermarket Corp. Tucked in among the vegetable vendors and fishmongers of Manhattan's Chinatown, Dynasty Supermarket has barely noticeable doors that open into a fully stocked supermarket with a wealth of Asian cooking ingredients, including live seafood, produce like fresh lotus root and durian, and every kind of tofu and noodle one could need. The store's true specialty, however, is its selection of dry goods, from its 14 kinds of rice to its entire aisle of dried and pickled vegetables, as well as the nuts, candies, and cookies without which no Chinese banquet is complete. **68 Elizabeth Street; 212/966-4943.**

Essex Street Market Established in 1940 as a place for street merchants and pushcart vendors to sell their wares, the Essex Street Market is a Lower East Side institution that houses 25 individually owned stands, many of them catering to the neighborhood's Latino community. Several butchers sell everything from chicken wings to homemade blood sausage and cows' feet. Two small cheese shops and other boutique stands round out the market's gorgeous selection. **120 Essex Street; www.essexstreetmarket.com.**

Fairway Market Located on the banks of the Hudson River, the 55,000-square-foot Harlem branch of this local store attracts food lovers from all over the city. Fairway Market sells a wide range of ethnic and specialty products alongside standard supermarket goods. Its centerpiece is its 10,000-square-foot walk-in refrigerator, housing a seemingly endless supply of meats (including 14-pound racks of lamb and 16-pound chuck steaks); an extensive fish counter; shelves stacked to the ceiling with eggs, milk, and butter; and quilted jackets for customers who have forgotten their coats.

2328 12th Avenue; 212/234-3883; www.fairwaymarket.com.

Kalustyan's Orient Trading A mecca for New York chefs, Kalustyan's specializes in Indian and Middle Eastern ingredients. It's packed with bins of seeds, nuts, beans, and grains, like toasted watermelon seeds, giant Peruvian lima beans, Chinese fermented black beans, and flavored couscous, as well as sweets, like turkish delight, Persian pistachio nougat, pomegranate syrup, and over 90 kinds of honey. Its second floor carries a small assortment of cookware, including a variety of tagines and copper Indian tableware. **123 Lexington Avenue; 212/685-3451; www.kalustyans.com.**

Murray's Cheese As is evident in the glorious selection available in its candy land of a West Village cheese shop, the staff at Murray's is crazy about cheese. The store has hundreds of international and domestic cheeses, from classics like English cheddar to rare finds like French tarentais and kunik, a tangy triple-crème goat cheese from Warrensburg, New York. The staff especially likes to educate customers about the large selection of American cheeses and offers free tastes of any of the goods behind the counter. **254 Bleecker Street; 212/243-3289; www.murrayscheese.com.**

Myers of Keswick Catering to New York's large British population and numerous Anglophiles, this tiny shop in Greenwich Village carries a wide variety of English staples, from PG Tips tea and tinned treacle pudding to Marmite, biscuits, and canned baked beans. The glass-front refrigerated case holds fresh bangers, shepherd's pie, and cornish pasties, with an array of British candies and chocolates on top. **634 Hudson Street; 212/691-4194; www.myersofkeswick.com.**

Sun Rise Mart Hidden in an intimate second-floor spot near Astor Place, Sun Rise is ready with every Japanese product a cook could ask for, from dried soba noodles to neatly packaged shiso leaves. Japanese expats fill the store daily to pick up sushi-grade octopus, frozen pork buns, and tubs of miso paste. **4 Stuyvesant Street, 2nd floor; 212/598-3040.**

Union Square Greenmarket The largest of New York City's 16 year-round farmers' markets, the Union Square Greenmarket is a destination for seekers of sustainably produced food. Farmers from all over the region sell a broad choice of seasonal produce here four times a week alongside local fishermen, cheese makers, bakers, and even wineries. **Union Square at Broadway and 18th Street.**

Zabar's Opened in 1934 as a small smoked-fish counter, this epicurean bastion of Manhattan's Upper West Side has since grown to serve more than 50,000 customers a week. Zabar's still specializes in smoked fish—over 80 varieties and cuts are for sale, from smoked salmon and gravlax to smoked loin of tuna—but the cheese counter, with more than 800 kinds of cheese from the world over, is the store's biggest draw. The second floor is piled high with an awe-inspiring assortment of cookware and kitchen appliances, from panini presses to tart pans of every size and shape. The Zabar's line of German steel knives is offered there, as well. **2245 Broadway; 212/787-2000; www.zabars.com.**

Clockwise from top left: outside Broadway Panhandler; the Union Square Greenmarket (2); Kalustyan's Orient Trading; Murray's Cheese; Zabar's; Fairway Market; and knives on display at the Panhandler.



SWEET TEXAS HOME

AT MOM'S HOUSE, MAKING CANDIES FROM SCRATCH IS
THE MOST HALLOWED OF CHRISTMASTIME TRADITIONS
BY LIZ PEARSON PHOTOGRAPHS BY PENNY DE LOS SANTOS



TEXAS SWEETS

THERE'S SOMETHING APPEALING ON A PURELY EMOTIONAL LEVEL ABOUT THE SWEET, OVER-THE-TOP INDULGENCE OF MAKING YOUR OWN CANDY

TWO DAYS BEFORE CHRISTMAS, I am sitting with my mother, Sue Raye, at the round oak table that dominates the kitchen of her one-story house, just off the central square in Mason, a county seat of 2,000 people in the Texas Hill Country west of Austin. We're flipping through tattered candy recipes taped to index cards. Outside, a thick fog has traveled across the lavender fields south of town and rolled right up to the panes of the kitchen window.

The two of us are spending the day making candies, just as my mother has done almost every year since my family moved to Austin from Ohio in 1978, when I was a year old. Mom gets up from the table, walks to the stove, and leans over a pot containing chocolate chips, peanut butter, and paraffin wax; these ingredients will be melted down and layered atop shredded coconut and sweetened condensed milk to be made into coconut candy bars. Next to her at the stove, I peer into another pot, which is filled with bubbling toffee, watching the mercury rise slowly on an old

glass Accu-Rite candy thermometer. I wait patiently for the concoction to reach 310 degrees, sugar's hard-crack stage (see "Cooking Sugar", page 69), and then I pour the molten toffee in thick streams onto a jelly roll pan. Next, I top it with semisweet chocolate chips, which melt instantly from the heat of the candy underneath.

In the meantime, Mom has moved her coconut candy bars to the garage to let them cool, and I grab a fistful of chopped Texas pecans and rain them down over the toffee. As we work, Lyle Lovett croons "Christmas Morning" from the clock radio on the counter.

I'VE BEEN CRAZY ABOUT MAKING candy since I was a kid. There's something about the over-the-top indulgence of it all that appeals to me on a purely emotional level. My first memories of homemade candy are from the 1980s, before my parents divorced, when Mom used to throw huge holiday open houses for my father's colleagues at the *Austin American-Statesman*, where he was the circulation manager. In the week leading up to those parties, my mother worked like a hound in the kitchen, making sweets for nearly a hundred guests: fudgy brownies, layer cakes, snickerdoodles, sugar cookies, and ice cream that she'd serve by the scoop in pastel-colored cupcake papers. I observed from the kitchen table, transfixed, as she stirred enormous bowls of nuts and crunchy Rice Krispies into melted white chocolate for her white chocolate crispies and mixed melted semisweet chocolate with miniature pink and green marshmallows, molded the mixture into logs, and rolled them in graham cracker crumbs to make what she called stained-glass-window candies.

When I was nine years old, my grandmother gave my family the *Candy Cookbook* by Mildred Brand. I studied it in bed each night, poring over the color photographs and descriptions of exotic-looking sweets I'd never tasted: orientals (airy chocolate-covered candies made with egg whites and glycerine), apple-walnut jellies, sea foam (a creamy, divinity-like candy), date chews, pineapple fudge, cream nut caramels, and on and on. When I got to the page that depicted thick, chocolatey peppermint patties stacked artfully on a Depression-glass dish, I knew instantly that these were candies I had to make.

A few days later, with the ingredients laid out before me and Mom hovering watchfully nearby, I haltingly read the recipe aloud, stopping short after the line "Cook to 236 degrees. Pour out onto a slab". I wasn't sure what a "slab" was;

RECIPE

Pecan Toffee

MAKES ABOUT 2½ POUNDS

Pure sugar syrup heated to the hard-crack stage becomes a hard, translucent candy. In this recipe, the addition of butter produces an opaque candy with a silkier but still crunchy texture.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2 tsp. plus 2 cups butter | 2 tsp. kosher salt |
| 2 cups sugar | 2 cups chopped toasted pecans |
| 2 tbsp. light corn syrup | |

1. Grease the bottom and sides of a 10" x 15" jelly roll pan with 2 tsp. butter and set aside. Put remaining butter, sugar, corn syrup, salt, and ½ cup water into a medium pot and bring to a boil over medium-high heat while stirring constantly. Attach a candy thermometer to inside edge of pot and cook, continuing to stir constantly, until sugar mixture is deep golden brown and registers 310° (the hard-crack stage; see "Cooking Sugar", page 69), about 20 minutes.

2. Pour the hot toffee onto the prepared pan and, using oven mitts, tilt and turn the pan to fill it evenly. Sprinkle the pecans over the top. (If you'd like to coat the toffee with chocolate before adding the nuts, let the toffee cool for 5 minutes, then sprinkle 2 cups semisweet chocolate chips over the top. Let sit for 1 minute, then use a rubber spatula to gently spread the melted chocolate evenly over the top. Sprinkle the pecans over the chocolate and gently press them down.)

3. Refrigerate toffee until it hardens, about 1 hour, then break into bite-size pieces. Serve toffee immediately or store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

Pecan toffee, facing page. Previous pages, hot fudge sauce; the Texas home of Sue Raye, author Liz Pearson's mother.





TEXAS SWEETS

I WAS TRANSFIXED AS MOM MIXED MELTED CHOCOLATE WITH PINK AND GREEN MARSHMALLOWS FOR HER STAINED-GLASS-WINDOW CANDIES

I turned to my mother. Smiling, she walked into the living room and removed the television from the small wooden table it rested on. The tabletop was a dust-covered tablet of brown marble I'd never noticed before. Mom removed the slab, lugged it into the kitchen, washed it with soapy water, and declared it fit for use. She walked me through the rest of the recipe, watching as I poured hot sugar syrup onto the marble, working it into long, milky-white ribbons of fondant as it cooled, kneading it like bread dough to blend in green food coloring and peppermint oil, and then forming the candy into disks, which I dipped in melted chocolate. When all was finished, I tasted the results. The peppermint patties were plenty sweet, but the chocolate covering had never quite set and the flavors never quite melded. Those flaws didn't prevent my mother from proudly taking the candies to work with her the next morning.

IT'S JUST PAST NOON IN MASON, and there's more candy to be made. Mom stands in a corner of the kitchen measuring out mounds of cocoa for her prized hot fudge sauce. The recipe, which came with a gas bill in 1974, is a closely guarded secret. I've asked her for it a few times, but she

always laughs and says the same thing, "You'll just have to find it in my recipe file when I'm gone." It's become a running joke between us, and it doesn't look as if I'll get her to spill the beans today. In any case, I'm distracted by other matters, rummaging through the bags I packed last night before driving out from Austin. My fears are confirmed: I've forgotten the sticks I'll need for the lime and cherry lollipops we're going to make. My mother quickly gets on the phone, enlisting outside help. Suzanne Bjork, a friend who runs Hinckley's Country Store, suggests calling a woman at Mason County Meats who makes candy on the side. Sure enough, she has a spare bag of lollipop sticks. Mom sets off on foot to pick them up.

By seven o'clock that evening, the candy making is nearly done. Most of the treats we've made get set aside for

Facing page, clockwise from top left: peppermint patties; testing the sugar syrup for the pecan toffee; the author, Liz Pearson, with her mother, rolling out dough for sugar cookies.

RECIPE

Peppermint Patties

MAKES 3 DOZEN

The recipe for this fondant-centered candy is based on one in the *Candy Cookbook* by Mildred Brand (Ideals, 1979).

2½ cups sugar	½ tsp. peppermint oil
½ cup heavy cream	6 drops green food coloring
½ cup milk	2½ cups semisweet chocolate chips, melted in a bowl
2 tbsp. butter	
¼ tsp. cream of tartar	

1. Stir together sugar, cream, milk, butter, and cream of tartar in a medium pot. Bring to a boil, without stirring; reduce heat to medium. Attach a candy thermometer to inside edge of pot; cook, without stirring, until it registers 236° (the soft-ball stage; see "Cooking Sugar", left), 12–14 minutes.

2. Pour sugar mixture onto a marble slab (see page 100 for a source). Using 2 heatproof spatulas, scrape mixture back and forth to make a fondant, moving it across the marble quickly until it becomes thick and just cool enough to touch, 3–4 minutes. Toward the end, completely work in the oil and coloring.

3. Gather fondant into a ball; knead until it resembles smooth dough, 3–4 minutes. (If it becomes powdery, work in a few drops of water.) Shape fondant into thirty-six 1½"-wide disks, each about ⅓" thick. (Keep unshaped fondant covered while you work.)

4. Working with one fondant disk at a time, dip them into chocolate using a fork; let excess drip off. Transfer to a wax paper-lined sheet pan. Let set in a cool spot. Serve immediately or store in an airtight container in a cool spot for up to a week.

COOKING SUGAR

The primary step in candy making is to boil water (and, sometimes, other ingredients, such as butter, corn syrup, or milk, depending on the candy being made) and sugar together to make a syrup. As the mixture boils, the water evaporates; the less water the syrup contains, the harder it will set when cooled. The stages sugar syrup goes through as it's cooked are named for the texture it takes on once it's completely cool. Some cookbooks list as many as a dozen different stages, but I've found that knowing just four major stages is sufficient for making most candies.

The first of these is the soft-ball stage, which occurs between 235°F and 240°F; after being cooked to this temperature, cooled sugar syrup forms a soft, malleable mass between your fingertips and is perfect for fudges and peppermint patties. Between 240°F and 265°F, sugar reaches the hard-ball stage, at which the cooled syrup is still malleable but doesn't squash as easily, so it is ideal for marshmallows and nougats. After being cooked to between 270°F and 290°F, the soft-crack stage, cooled syrup will break gently and make for toothsome gumdrops and taffies. Finally, hard candies like lollipops and crunchy toffees require sugar syrup that has reached the hard-crack stage (300°F to 310°F), at which the cooled syrup snaps audibly. Sugar syrup cooked past the hard-crack stage becomes caramel.

For making candy, an accurate candy thermometer is essential, but many cooks also rely on the "cold water test", in which the sugar syrup is removed from the heat and a spoonful of it is dropped into ice water (as shown on facing page, top right). If the cooled sugar syrup hasn't reached its desired hardness, it's put back on the heat. If you find you've overcooked your syrup by a few degrees, all is not lost. Adding ¼ to ½ cup water or milk (or whatever additional liquid is called for in the recipe) will reduce its temperature. —L.P.

TEXAS SWEETS

SERVING TRAYS ARE PILED WITH A KALEIDOSCOPIC ARRAY OF SWEETS: LOLLIPOPS, PEPPERMINT PATTIES, COCONUT CANDY BARS, AND MORE



METHOD

Coconut Candy Bars

In this recipe, paraffin wax—a now mostly forgotten candy-making ingredient—is mixed with chocolate so that it will set properly when cooled and take on a shiny appearance. (To learn more about paraffin wax, see page 98; see page 100 for a source.) Heat oven to 350°. Stir together 2 cups graham cracker crumbs, 1/2 cup melted butter, and 1/2 cup sugar in a medium bowl. Transfer crumb mixture to a 9" x 13" baking pan and press down with your fingers to form an even layer. Bake until just golden around the edges, 10–12 minutes. Set aside. Put 2 cups sweetened shredded coconut and one 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk into a bowl and stir well. Transfer the coconut mixture to the baking pan and spread it out evenly over the hot crust. Return pan to oven and bake until golden brown around the edges, 15–17 minutes more. Set the pan aside to let cool completely. Put 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips, 1 tbsp. creamy peanut butter, and 1 oz. paraffin wax (roughly, a 2 1/2" x 1" x 1/2" piece), shaved into small pieces with a knife, into a medium pot and cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until completely smooth, 3–4 minutes. Pour chocolate mixture over coconut layer in the pan and use a rubber spatula to spread out to the edges to form a thin layer. Set aside in a cool spot to let cool completely. Cut the candy into 48 squares. Serve immediately or layer between sheets of wax paper in an airtight container and refrigerate for up to 2 weeks. Makes 4 dozen.

Christmas Day, but that still leaves a veritable mountain of desserts for the impromptu dinner of roast chicken that I've decided to make tonight for Mom and a few of her friends. After the dinner dishes have been cleared away, everyone retires to the living room, where serving trays on a long mahogany sideboard display a kaleidoscopic array of sweets, including Mom's stained-glass windows, the lollipops, the sugar cookies, and my peppermint patties, which I've finally mastered. Still in my apron, I grab a coconut candy bar, collapse into a chair, and take in the cozy scene. I guess you could say that Mom and I have finally gotten our just desserts. ✍️

SAVEUR.COM: *Recipes for white chocolate crispies and stained-glass-window candies.*

IN THE SAVEUR KITCHEN, page 94: *Information on paraffin wax.*

THE PANTRY, page 100: *Sources for paraffin wax, flavored oils, lollipop sticks, and a marble slab.*

RECIPE

Lollipops

MAKES 30

This recipe, a version of which appears in the *Candy Cookbook*, can be flavored any way you like. Don't substitute a flavored extract for the flavored oil, though; its taste will be diminished when it's added to the hot sugar. These lollipops (facing page) are best when made on a dry day, as humidity may prevent the candy from hardening properly.

1 tsp. canola oil	1/2 tsp. flavored oil, such as
2 cups sugar	cherry or lime (see page 100)
2/3 cup light corn syrup	15 drops food coloring, such as
Pinch of kosher salt	red or green

1. Grease 2 large sheet pans with canola oil. Arrange thirty 4"-long lollipop sticks (see page 100) on the pans, spacing them about 3" apart; set aside.

2. Put sugar, corn syrup, salt, and 1 cup water into a medium pot; stir until well combined. Cover pot and bring sugar mixture to a boil over medium-high heat. Uncover pot and attach a candy thermometer to the inside edge. Cook, without stirring, until candy registers 310° (the hard-crack stage; see "Cooking Sugar", page 69), about 15 minutes. Immediately remove pot from heat and quickly stir in flavored oil and food coloring. Working quickly, spoon about 2 tbsp. of the sugar syrup over the top of each lollipop stick to form 2"-3" circles. (If the syrup gets too stiff to spoon out, reheat over medium heat for a minute or two until it becomes easy to work with again.)

3. Set lollipops aside in a cool, dry spot to let rest until they've hardened. Serve immediately, wrap individually, or arrange in a single layer in an airtight container and store in a cool, dry spot for up to a week.



FOOD OF THE G



ODS



IN SALVADOR, CAPITAL OF THE BRAZILIAN STATE OF BAHIA, CUISINE IS A VIBRANT EXPRESSION OF THE REGION'S RICH SPIRITUAL LIFE
BY MARICEL E. PRESILLA PHOTOGRAPHS BY PENNY DE LOS SANTOS



BAHIA

TAKE IT AS A GOOD omen that the first person I meet in Salvador, the capital city of Brazil's state of Bahia, is a serenading taxi driver. He emerges from the bustle of the city's airport: a slender man in his early 40s with a dazzling smile. As he loads our bags into the trunk, he introduces himself to me and my husband, Alex, as Jubiraci Martins da Silva but tells us to call him by his nickname, Cacique; I

recognize the word from its use in many Latin countries as meaning chief. As he peels away from the curb, he breaks into song and continues his jazzy aria as we drive into town, interrupting himself only to point out restaurants and street food vendors that he insists we later try. By the time we reach the house we've rented in Santo Antônio, a quiet residential neighborhood of grand old mansions and graceful

plazas in Salvador's *cidade alta*, or upper city, we've been completely won over by Cacique's irrepressible charisma. I ask him whether he'd be willing to be our guide for the rest of our stay, and he accepts on the spot.

We've come to Salvador, a coastal city of 3 million inhabitants a thousand miles north of Rio de Janeiro, to immerse ourselves in authentic Bahian cuisine, a subject that first

piqued my interest years ago, when I began reading the books of Jorge Amado, one of Brazil's greatest writers, who was born here in 1912. In his novel *Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands*, written in 1966, the title character, a cooking teacher who runs her own school in Salvador, is torn between the ghost of her dead spouse, a seductive scoundrel named Vadinho, and her respectable but straitlaced second husband. In one memorable scene, Dona Flor unleashes her repressed sensuality by feverishly grating coconuts for vatapá, a classic Bahian dish made with cashews, peanuts, bread, coconut milk, and dried and fresh shrimp that epitomizes the region's voluptuous, soulful cooking.

Amado's descriptions of Salvador's steep, cobblestone streets, its weathered colonial buildings, and its African-influenced culture

RECIPE

Moqueca de Peixe

(Fish Stew with Coconut Milk)

SERVES 6

This sultry dish is a specialty of Bahia. It's usually enriched with coconut milk and dendê oil (see page 95), two ingredients that are emblematic of that state's cooking. Since dendê oil is so emphatically flavored, author Presilla likes to depart from local tradition and add a couple of tablespoons of dendê oil toward the end of the cooking process, rather than earlier on.

- 6 tbsp. chopped cilantro leaves
- 2 tbsp. fresh lime juice
- 6 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 6 6-oz. skin-on boneless grouper filets
- 3 medium yellow onions (2 chopped, 1 thinly sliced)
- 1 13.5-oz. can coconut milk
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 ripe plum tomatoes, cored (2 finely chopped, 2 sliced)
- 2 tbsp. dendê oil (see page 95), optional
- Toasted farinha de mandioca (yuca flour; see page 100), optional

1. Put 2 tbsp. of the cilantro, lime juice, garlic, and salt into a wide shallow dish and stir to combine. Transfer the grouper to dish and turn to coat all over with garlic mixture. Let marinate at room temperature for 20 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, purée half of the chopped onions and the coconut milk in a blender and set aside. Heat olive oil in a large deep skillet over medium heat. Add remaining chopped onions and salt and cook until translucent, 5–6 minutes. Add chopped tomatoes and 2 tbsp. of the cilantro and cook, stirring occasionally, until tomatoes are soft, about 5 minutes. Add reserved coconut milk purée and salt; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until sauce is slightly thickened, 8–10 minutes. Stir in dendê oil.

3. Nestle marinated grouper filets into sauce, skin side up; pour any remaining marinade over the top and add the remaining cilantro. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium, and cook, covered, spooning sauce over filets from time to time, until fish is just cooked through, 15–20 minutes. During the last 5 minutes of cooking, scatter the sliced onions and sliced tomatoes over the top. Serve, sprinkled with a bit of yuca flour, with rice and Bahian salsa (see recipe, page 80), if you like.

Fish stew with coconut milk, below. Facing page, a street in Salvador. Previous pages, revelers at the Lavagem do Bonfim, one of Brazil's largest religious festivals.





made an indelible impression on me. But other elements of this culture intrigued me, too. Bahia is, among other things, a birthplace of samba; the capital of the Afro-Brazilian religion known as candomblé; and the site of the Lavagem do Bonfim, one of Brazil's largest annual religious festivals, which centers around a huge religious procession and will be taking place in just a few days. I know of few places where music, spirituality, and history seem to mingle so freely. At the confluence of all these elements lies Bahia's cuisine, a lively mix of African and Portuguese foodways that is unlike any other in Latin America.

A moment of prayer during the Lavagem do Bonfim, above. Right, beef stew with okra and sausage. Following page, a scene at the São Joaquim market.

CACIQUE APPEARS AT our house the following morning, shouting through the open front door, "Maricel, Alex, bom dia [good morning]!" We sit down to a breakfast of buttered bread dunked in hot, milky coffee. When I mention my hope of learning to cook with

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BAHIA

some of the city's restaurant chefs, Cacique waves that notion away and tells me that he has studied under the city's very best cook—his mother. Besides, he says, the key to Bahian cuisine cannot be found in restaurant cooking. One has to see how people eat on the street and in their homes and, just as important, get to know the local ingredients.

Cacique whisks us around Salvador that very day to shop at the city's produce markets and open-air bazaars. Everywhere we

go he's greeted with hugs and an enthusiastic "Oi, Cacique!" At the labyrinthine, souklike Feira de São Joaquim, an outdoor market in the city's commercial district, he guides us through the crowd toward a friendly vendor selling camarões secos (plump dried and smoked whole shrimp, used for lending a briny depth to various Bahian dishes) and freshly pressed dendê oil (see page 95), which is made from the fruit of the African oil palm and used in myriad ways:

for adding a velvety texture and nutty flavor to moqueca de peixe, one of Bahia's celebrated seafood stews; for frying acarajé, a local variety of black-eyed pea fritter; and for seasoning everything from salads to grilled fish.

At another stand, we buy bagfuls of chiles, including fiery malagueta, cumaris, and a relative of the habañero called pimenta-do-cheiro, as well as tropical fruits (see "Brazilian Bounty", page 78)—so many, in fact, that we resort to hiring a young man with a wheelbarrow to haul them all back to the car. I also purchase a few handmade moquecarias, the traditional earthenware cooking vessels that retain heat and allow stews to come to the table the way Bahians prefer them: piping hot and still bubbling. Then we make one last stop, at a citrus vendor, from whom Cacique buys a few dozen juicy limes. "We'll need these for the caipirinhas," he says with a grin.

When we get back, Cacique makes a few of those cachaça-based cocktails (made with sugarcane rum), and I ask Mareneusa de Jesus Salles, the caretaker, to help us with dinner. First we prepare caruru, a rich, porridgelike okra dish made with dried shrimp and, sometimes, coconut milk. Okra, called quiabo in Portuguese, is also key to a second dish, quiabada, a meat-laden stew that's sprinkled with toasted yuca flour before being served. (Bahians—indeed, all Brazilians—frequently use this ingredient, called farinha de mandioca, to soak up juices and bind together flavors in dishes just before serving them.) Finally, Cacique walks me through the steps of making his version of molho de pimenta, a piquant salsa-like condiment that adds brightness to this rich, earthy food.

THE HISTORY OF Cacique's hometown and the region surrounding it is as intricate and layered as *(continued on page 80)*

RECIPE

Quiabada

(Braised Beef Stew with Okra and Smoked Sausage)

SERVES 8

The author first sampled this Bahian dish, a gumbolike stew, at a restaurant near Salvador. In it, tender hunks of dried beef, beef chuck, and a smoked sausage called calabreza are simmered with okra. If you can't find dried beef, replace it with an equivalent amount of beef chuck, but don't soak it.

- 1 lb. dried beef, preferably Brazilian-style carne seca or tasajo (see page 100), rinsed and cut into 1½" pieces
- 1½ lbs. okra, stemmed and cut into 1" rounds
- 1 tbsp. fresh lime juice
- 3½ lbs. beef chuck, cut into 1½" chunks
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1 medium green bell pepper, cored, seeded, and finely chopped
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro leaves
- ¼ cup chopped mint leaves
- 2 tbsp. tomato sauce
- 1 lb. smoked pork sausage, such as Portuguese calabreza or kielbasa, cut into ½" rounds
- Toasted farinha de mandioca (yuca flour; see page 100), optional

1. Put dried beef into a large bowl, add enough water to cover by 4", and set aside to let soak for 6 hours, changing the water every hour or so. Drain beef and set aside.

2. Toss okra with lime juice; set aside. Season chuck with pepper; set aside. Heat oil in a pot over medium-high heat. Add half the chuck; cook, stirring, until browned, 12–14 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer beef to a plate. Repeat. Add garlic; cook until fragrant, 15–20 seconds. Reduce heat to medium; add onions and peppers. Cook until caramelized, 8–10 minutes. Add cilantro, mint, and tomato sauce; cook until herbs are no longer raw, about 2 minutes. Add reserved dried beef and beef chuck and 1 quart water; stir. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer, covered, until beef is tender, about 1 hour. Add sausage; cook, covered, until beef is very tender, 45 minutes. Stir in reserved okra and lime juice. Cook, uncovered, stirring often, until okra is falling apart, about 45 minutes more. Serve over rice, sprinkled with a bit of yuca flour, and Bahian salsa (see recipe, page 80), if you like.

BRAZILIAN BOUNTY

The vast and variegated terrain of Bahia's 220,000 square miles yields an unparalleled abundance of tropical fruits, many of which are seldom seen in markets outside the region. Here are a few favorites.

1 | Cupuaçu (*Theobroma grandiflorum*) This succulent, mildly acidic-tasting relative of cacao is prized for its perfumed ivory pulp, which Bahians use to flavor ice creams, jams, and cocktails.

2 | Bilimbi (*Averrhoa bilimbi*) The small, crunchy, cucumber-shaped fruit of this tree (which is native to Southeast Asia) lends a sour tang to stews and other dishes.

3 | Ingá-Cipó (*Inga edulis*) The bean pod of these tall trees, native to the Amazon, is loved by locals for its sweet, soft pulp.

4 | Jaca (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*) The meat of these enormous fruits, indigenous to Southeast Asia and also known as jackfruit, tastes similar to ripe bananas. They're eaten raw or cooked in a syrup.

5 | Caju (*Anacardium occidentale*) Bahians prize many parts of the cashew tree: the kidney-shaped fruit, the nut that grows inside that fruit, and the stalk, often known as cashew apple (which contains a sweetly tannic juice that tastes of clove and cinnamon).

6 | Umbu (*Spondias tuberosa*) This greenish fruit contains a juicy, sweet pulp that's commonly turned into sorbet and juice.

7 | Aracá (*Psidium araca* or *Psidium guineense*) Also known as Brazilian guava, this small, pale yellow fruit is eaten raw and made into jams. Its flavor is musky and somewhat acidic.

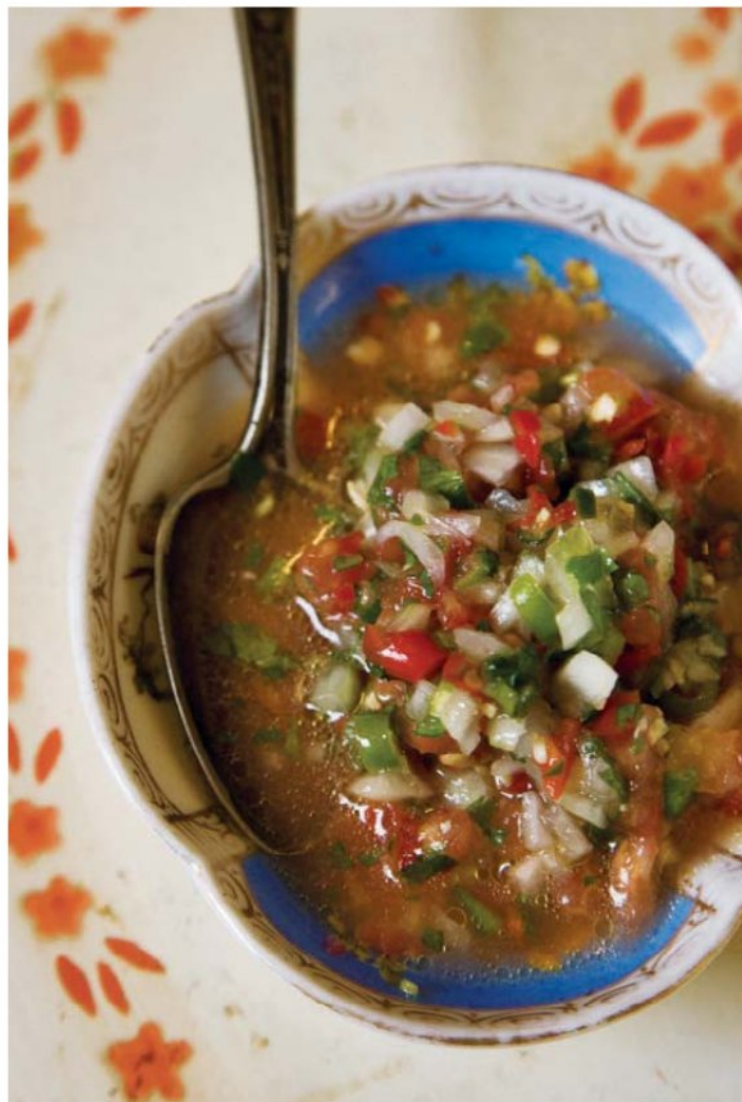
8 | Jambu (*Eugenia malaccensis*) Also known as Malay apples, these pear-shaped Southeast Asian natives have a sweet, white, crunchy flesh.

9 | Pinha (*Annona crassiflora*) When this small fruit is ripe, the blue-green skin can be popped open to reveal a juicy interior with a custardy richness. Its flavor is redolent of vanilla and bananas.





BAHIA



METHOD

Cacique's Molho de Pimenta

(Bahian Salsa)

This preparation, a Bahian salsa-like condiment, comes from Jubiraci Martins da Silva (a k a Cacique), a Salvador native and a friend of author Presilla's. Like Mexican pico de gallo, it's made with fresh tomatoes, onions, chiles, and cilantro, all finely chopped and mixed together with lime juice. Cacique uses the tiny, fiery malagueta chile, which is hard to find in the U.S. Thai chiles make a good substitute; they have a similar pungency and clean flavor. Finely chop 20 stemmed Thai chiles and transfer to a bowl. Add 5 tbsp. fresh lime juice, 3 tbsp. finely chopped cilantro leaves, 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, 1 cored finely chopped medium tomato, 1/2 finely chopped small yellow onion, and kosher salt to taste and toss well. Bahian salsa may be kept refrigerated for 2-3 days. Makes about 1 1/2 cups.

(continued from page 77) its food. Salvador was the capital of the Portuguese colony of Brazil—and thus Portugal's economic hub in the New World—from 1549 until

1763, when Rio de Janeiro took its place. As was the case in many European territories in the Americas, the prosperity that Salvador experienced was closely tied to the



Above, from left: Bahian salsa; a worker at the Feira de São Joaquim market; crowds in front of Salvador's Nosso Senhor do Bonfim church at the Lavagem do Bonfim festival; chiles at a market.

labor of Africans who had been brought to the city as slaves. In the 17th and 18th centuries millions of Africans were moved through the port of Salvador to be put to work on the vast sugarcane plantations in the Recôncavo, a rich agricultural area southwest of Salvador, and elsewhere in the country. Some

were Bantu tribespeople from central and southern Africa; others came from the Yoruba kingdoms of West Africa and carried with them a complex spiritual system based on a belief in divinities (called *orixás* in Portuguese) that were endowed with highly specific powers and personalities. Though many slaves converted to Catholicism, they often retained the core aspects of their ancestral religion, namely, their allegiance to the *orixás*. Eventually, the mingling of these belief systems gave rise in Bahia to candomblé, a religion that continues to be practiced by millions of Brazilians today.

Feasting is an essential part of candomblé and is linked with the tradition of offering food to the

BAHIA



orixás, who are believed to have well-defined cravings. For example, Oxalá, candomblé's supreme, Zeus-like god, prefers plain, unsalted white rice; Oxum, the sensual, Aphrodite-like goddess who rules the rivers, has a predilection for more-seasoned dishes, such as *xinxim de galinha*, a chicken stew made with dendê oil; and Iansã, the female thunder goddess, demands acarajé.

Those Bahian bean fritters are our quarry one morning when Cacique drives Alex and me to Itapuã, a beachside village north of Salvador. We're looking for a street vendor named Jaciara de Jesus Santos, known to her regulars as Cira, who has been selling her fritters here for more than 20

years. Everywhere you go across Bahia, in cities and small towns, you see turbaned matrons, attired in traditional dresses, making these handheld snacks in copper cauldrons, out of a batter consisting of onions and soaked, peeled, and ground black-eyed peas that's fried in dendê oil. The fritters are usually sliced open and stuffed with tomatoes, cucumbers, rehydrated dried shrimp, and vatapá. When we find Cira at her tent near the water, I notice she's wearing a blue dress, which, Cacique explains, means that she worships Yemanjá, the *orixá* who controls the sea. Cira's acarajé are worth the trek: they're feather light (a result of her having beaten the batter for as long as 20 min-

utes, she tells me) and delicious, even eaten on their own, without their usual accompaniments.

Acarajé are just one expression of Bahians' love for beans, which cooks here prepare in all sorts of ways. When my husband and I take Cacique to lunch at a posh restaurant called Trapiche Adelaide, on Salvador's waterfront, his face falls as he peruses the menu. "There are no bean dishes," he says, plaintively. "I need my feijão." Although black beans are more popular in southern Brazil, here in Bahia the small pink beans known as feijão-mulatinho, as well as black-eyed peas (called feijão-fradinho), are the preferred choice. The latter starred in the excellent dish

called *arrumadinho*—a vibrant salad of beans, tomatoes, and pan-fried smoked sausage sprinkled with yuca flour and a fiery malagueta chile sauce—that I ate at a small café near my house. That dish inspired me to spend one morning whipping up variations on it using fresh shrimp from Salvador's fish market. As for feijão-mulatinho, those beans are the standard selection for the local adaptation of feijoada, the hearty Portuguese meat stew.

Cacique has been raving to me for days about the feijoada served by a coconut vendor named Raimundo, who sells his homemade version on Saturdays at a storefront in Pelourinho, the city's colonial (*continued on page 82*)





BAHIA

RECIPE

Salada de Feijão-Fradinho

(Black-Eyed Pea Salad)

SERVES 6-8

Black-eyed peas are the main ingredient in many Bahian dishes, including acarajé, a fritter; re-fogado, an aromatic sauce made with cilantro; and salads like this one, which author Presilla based on a local recipe.

- 1½ cups unpeeled dried shrimp (see page 100)**
- 1 lb. dried black-eyed peas, rinsed well**
- 2 yellow onions (1 halved, 1 finely chopped)**
- ¾ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves**
- 10 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil**
- ¾ cup fresh lime juice**
- 3 tbsp. chopped cilantro leaves**
- 2 ripe tomatoes, chopped**
- 1 green bell pepper, seeded and finely chopped**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste**
- 10 medium head-on, shell-on fresh shrimp**
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped**

1. Put dried shrimp into a bowl and cover with boiling water; set aside, covered, to let soak until soft, 2-3 hours. Drain; set aside. Meanwhile, put black-eyed peas and halved onion into a pot; cover with water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer, covered, until tender, about 1½ hours. Drain and transfer to a bowl; let cool. Add rehydrated shrimp, remaining onions, ½ cup parsley, ½ cup oil, 11 tbsp. lime juice, 2 tbsp. cilantro, tomatoes, peppers, and salt and pepper to peas; stir well and set salad aside.

2. Toss together remaining parsley, lime juice, and cilantro with fresh shrimp, garlic, salt, and pepper in a bowl; set aside to let marinate for 10 minutes. Heat remaining oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add shrimp and cook, turning once, until just cooked through, 2-3 minutes. Top salad with shrimp and serve promptly.

(continued from page 80a) center. One Saturday, we arrive early enough to grab a plastic table set out on the street and dive into heaping bowls of beans decadently enriched with sundried beef, salted pigs' feet, tail, and ears, smoked pork ribs and chops, slab bacon, ham hocks, beef tongue, and lingüiça, the Portuguese-style smoked sausage. The stew is rustic and satisfying, and the only time any of us speaks during the meal is when someone shouts, "Raimundo, por favor, mais uma!" to request another beer.

ONE EVENING, Cacique takes us to a neighborhood called Liberdade to see a performance by Ilê Aiyê, a popular local band that's accompanied by dancers. After the show, I meet an old friend of his, a member of the dance troupe named Rose Kan, who invites us to visit her family's *terreiro*, a candomblé place of worship; they're usually housed in or near the home of a priest. Kan

explains that her sister is a priestess of Ogun, the deity associated with war and iron. When we arrive at their home, we're ushered into a small consecrated space on the first floor. There, the deity's symbol, a single stone, sits in an earthenware pot accompanied by offerings of caruru and yam—a typically Bahian union of food and faith, I think to myself.

Nowhere are those facets of the local culture more colorfully on display than at the Lavagem do Bonfim, the large festival—second only to carnival in size—that takes place in the streets of Salvador each January. The celebration is dedicated to the Christ of Bonfim, an entity that candomblé devotees believe to be the incarnation of both Christ and the supreme deity, Oxalá. It begins with a procession to the sacred Nosso Senhor do Bonfim church, which sits atop a hill in a neighborhood known as Bonfim. On the morning of this year's festival, Cacique drives us

down to the lower city and parks near the Mercado Modelo, a crafts market, where throngs of dancers, musicians, and pilgrims have already begun the festivities. Street vendors have set up stalls selling acarajé and fried fish. Thousands of people are dancing to the rhythmic beating of drums, and we begin to follow a procession of bejeweled women, known as *mães de santo*, or caretakers of the *orixás*, who are dressed in turbans, embroidered white blouses, and hooped skirts. Other participants and onlookers pour in from side streets, and

Mareneusa de Jesus Salles and Juraci Martins da Silva (a.k.a. Cacique), below, in the author's rented house in Salvador. Previous pages, from left: black-eyed pea salad; Cacique chops ingredients.



BAHIA

soon the crowd is so thick that we can hardly move. When we finally reach the top of the hill, we see the women tossing water on the steps of the church and out into the crowd, in a ritualistic act of spiritual cleansing and blessing.

Soon, the frenzy of colors and people becomes almost overwhelming. In a flash, I revisit everything

I've experienced in Salvador: Cacique's graceful cooking, the overflowing markets, Salvador's faded colonial patina and its African-influenced rhythms, the complex flavors of the region's foods, and, most of all, the Bahian people I've met, who comfortably inhabit a world in which the sacred is woven into the very fabric of life. 🐦

IN THE SAVEUR KITCHEN, page 94: *All about dendê oil.*
THE PANTRY, page 100: *Sources for dendê oil, toasted yuca flour, Brazilian-style dried beef, and dried shrimp.*



METHOD

Caipirinha

(Cachaça-Lime Cocktail)

The key to making a smooth, refreshing caipirinha (above), the sugarcane rum cocktail that is Brazil's national drink, is to crush the lime vigorously to release its essential oils. Use the best cachaça you can find (cheaper versions have an overly strong, alcoholic flavor). We like a brand, made in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, called Pirapora. Cut 1 large lime in half lengthwise, then cut each half crosswise into 4 pieces and transfer to a cocktail shaker. Add 1½-2 tbsp. sugar and muddle with a pestle or a spoon to release the lime's juice and essential oils. Add ½ cup cachaça and 4-5 ice cubes. Cover cocktail shaker and shake vigorously for 10 seconds. Pour into a glass (preferably a tumbler or an old-fashioned or rocks glass), garnish rim with a slice of lime, and serve immediately. Serves 1.

THE GUIDE

SALVADOR

Dinner with drinks and tip:

EXPENSIVE Over \$30 MODERATE \$15-\$29 INEXPENSIVE Under \$15

WHERE TO STAY

CONVENTO DO CARMO *rua do Carmo 1 (71/3327-8400; reservas@conventodocarmo.com.br).* Rates: \$380 double. This luxury hotel, located in a restored 18th-century convent in the neighborhood of Santo Antônio, features a lovely restaurant that serves classic Portuguese dishes.

HOTEL REDFISH *ladeira do Boqueirão 1 (71/3243-8473; info@hotelredfish.com).* Rates: \$135 double. Many of the spacious, whimsically decorated rooms in this centrally located hotel have balconies with wonderful views.

WHERE TO EAT

ACARAJÉ DE CIRA *rua Aristides Milton, Itapuã (no phone).* Inexpensive. For excellent acarajé (black-eyed pea fritters), visit this beachside stand in the village of Itapuã, 20 miles north of Salvador.

FEIJOADA DE RAIMUNDO *rua Silva-Jandin 7 (71/3249-4170).* Inexpensive. This makeshift restaurant on a busy street in Pelourinho, Salvador's central district, serves the city's most sought after feijoada. Open only on Saturdays.

PARAÍSO TROPICAL *R. Edgar Loureiro 98-B, Cabula (71/3384-7464).* Expensive. Located in a suburb of Salvador, this lovely restaurant is famous for the tropical fruit that owner Luiz Gilberto Andrade Pimentel grows in the attached garden and at the plantation he owns in Bahia's Recôncavo region.

RESTAURANTE-ESCOLA DO SENAC *praça José de Alencar 13/19 (71/3324-4551).* Moderate. This downtown restaurant is run by a state-owned cooking school. Sample more than 50 Bahian dishes and desserts at the buffet, including delicious quindim de Yayá (egg and coconut tarts).

TRAPICHE ADELAIDE *praça Tubinambás 02 (71/3326-2211; www.trapicheadelaide.com.br).* Expensive. Built on a pier overlooking All Saints Bay, this contemporary restaurant serves modern Brazilian cuisine in a sleek setting. The gnocchi made from arracachá, a Brazilian tuber related to the carrot, and the sun-dried beef (carne seca) are particularly good.

WHERE TO SHOP

FEIRA DE SÃO JOAQUIM *between All Saints Bay and Avenida Oscar Pontes.* Shop for everything from earthenware cooking vessels to fresh tropical fruit at this bustling seaside market, which is Salvador's largest. It's a five-minute bus or taxi ride from the historic city center. Open every day except Sunday.



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King of the Feast

Tender, succulent roasts, as simple as they are magnificent, deserve their place at the center of the table

by Molly Stevens photographs by André Baranowski

IT WOULD BE UNDERSTATEMENT to say that my family celebrates Christmas in a big way.

Every year, as many as 65 of us descend on the ancestral homestead, a 130-year-old Greek Revival house surrounded by cornfields and towering maple trees in western New York State. The modest kitchen can't handle the hordes, so my brother and his wife, who take care of the place now, organize an elabo-

rate potluck, requesting their relatives to bring all sorts of homemade dishes, from casseroles to condiments. There are plenty of serious cooks in my family, and many of the contributions are impressive; but, invariably, my 81-year-old father, Dann Stevens, trumps all our efforts when he shows up proudly holding his glorious prime rib of beef.

A couple of weeks before the meal, Dad puts in a call to a buddy of his who works as a meatpacker in Sheldon, New York, about 20 miles from where he lives, and has him set aside a full, seven-rib roast. Then, two days before Christmas, he picks up the 20-pound piece of beef, takes it home, and leaves it, wrapped in butcher paper, on the back deck of his house, hoping against a December warm spell.

On Christmas Day, he gets up at six in the morning, hoists the meat into an extra-large roasting pan that he acquired just for this purpose, rubs it with salt, pepper, and rosemary, peels a head of garlic, makes small slits in the meat with a paring knife, and tucks in as many cloves as he can. Then he slides the roast into the oven and sits down with his morning coffee and paper. A few hours later, he hauls out his masterpiece, covers it in foil, and places it carefully in the trunk of his car for the hour-long drive to the family celebration. By the time he's arrived and handed the roast off to the kitchen crew, the meat is perfect: bloody near the bone, rosy and juicy throughout, with a gorgeously charred crust. It steals the spotlight every time.

WHAT ACCOUNTS FOR THE enduring appeal of roasts? Tradition and ceremony have plenty to do with it, certainly, but there's more to it than that. Few things prepared in a contemporary kitchen trace a more direct connection to ancient ways of cooking and eating than a roast does. By today's standards, roasting is a simple technique—in essence, nothing more than exposing food to dry heat—and yet a delicious roast remains one of the most generous gifts a cook can offer. In recent years, we've turned to roasting all sorts of edibles, from vegetables and fruits to delicate fish filets. Often, however, the best expression of this cooking method is the most

MOLLY STEVENS, a frequent contributor to *SAVEUR*, is the author of *All About Braising: The Art of Uncomplicated Cooking* (W. W. Norton, 2004).

RECIPE

Crisp Roast Pork

SERVES 8

This luscious, Caribbean-inspired preparation for garlicky roast pork (facing page) works especially well with the cut known as picnic shoulder, which gives you crisper skin than the more popular boston butt. Some cooks like to remove the skin and cook it separately, but we like the mix of textures that you get when you roast the pork with the skin on. (Besides, the fat layer under the skin continually bastes the meat as it roasts.)

- 2 tbsp. cumin seeds
- 1 tbsp. black peppercorns
- 2 tbsp. dried oregano
- 1/4 tsp. cayenne
- 12 cloves garlic
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1 bone-in skin-on pork picnic shoulder (about 8 lbs.)
- 1 cup fresh orange juice
- 1/2 cup fresh lime juice
- 2 tbsp. olive oil

1. Toast cumin and peppercorns in a skillet over medium heat, 2–3 minutes. Transfer to a small food processor along with oregano, cayenne, garlic, and 1 tbsp. salt; process to a paste. Cut about twenty-five 1 1/2"-wide slits in the pork about 1" deep. Rub garlic paste all over pork, pressing it into slits. Transfer pork to a roasting pan. Whisk together orange juice, lime juice, oil, and 2 tbsp. salt in a bowl; pour over pork. Cover and refrigerate, turning occasionally, for 18–24 hours.

2. Remove pork from refrigerator 2 hours before you are ready to roast, to allow it to come to room temperature. Heat oven to 325°. Roast, basting every 30 minutes, until a meat thermometer inserted in thickest part of pork registers 160°, about 3 hours total. (Add 1 cup water to pan when liquid evaporates; cover loosely with foil if skin gets too dark.) Let rest for 15 minutes, then carve (following steps shown at right) and serve.

Carving Pork Shoulder



1 Using a carving knife and fork, slice down to the bone near the shank end of the pork shoulder. Make a second, diagonal downward cut to produce a wedge. Set wedge aside on the carving platter.



2 While holding the pork shoulder firmly with the carving fork, repeat the diagonal downward cut (using wide, sweeping strokes) to create thick slices, leaving them attached at the bottom.



3 Continue slicing away from the shank end until you can cut no farther. Make a horizontal cut underneath the slices to separate them from the rest of the shoulder.



4 Working around the remainder of the pork shoulder, cut off slices where possible. Using the knife and carving fork, transfer the slices to a serving platter and arrange as shown on facing page.





Carving Chicken



1 Set chicken on its side with the breast away from you. Place a fork against the thigh to steady chicken and, using a carving knife, cut between the body and the leg to begin to separate the two.



2 Pierce the breast with the fork to steady the chicken, and complete the separation of leg from body by working the knife through the connecting joint. Set the leg aside on the carving platter.



3 Hold the breast down with the fork. Using the knife, make an incision along-side the wishbone. Make a deep cut along the breastbone to remove breast meat. Halve and set aside on carving platter.



4 Separate the drumstick from the thigh by cutting through connecting joint while holding the leg steady with the fork. Turn the chicken over and repeat preceding steps on the other side.

Roasted meats, fish, and poultry have been the favored centerpiece of ceremonial feasts since before the beginning of recorded history

time-honored one: a plump bird, a whole fish, or a substantial cut of meat, perfectly roasted and paraded to the table in its magnificent entirety.

Roasts have been the favored centerpiece of ceremonial feasts in much of the world since before the beginning of recorded history. Before the large-scale domestication of pigs, sheep, and cows, game tended to be the star of the show. In 40 B.C., the Roman general Mark Antony boasted in a letter to his wife about a lavish meal of “ducks and turkeys and peacocks roasted and served with all their wonderful feathers” that he’d enjoyed at the palace of Queen Cleopatra in Egypt. Similarly, accounts from the Middle Ages document formidable repasts that began with soups and porridges and escalated to impressive spreads of roasted swans, capons, geese, and venison.

The foods chronicled in these writings were roasted in an open hearth before a wood fire. The meat was likely rotated continually on a spit by hand or was suspended with string and twirled in front of the fire, so that it would brown evenly and baste in its own juices. Mechanized roasting spits, which started appearing in Europe in the 17th century, made open-hearth cooking somewhat less arduous and also allowed cooks to tend multiple cuts of meat at the same time more easily.

In the United States, the forerunner of roasting as most of us know it today emerged in the late 18th century, with the introduction of the reflector oven, or “tin kitchen”—essentially, a box or a crude enclosure made of reflective metal that was placed in front of an open hearth so that it partially surrounded the meat, reflecting the fire’s heat to cook the food more safely and efficiently. The real breakthrough, though, arrived in home kitchens some decades later, in the form of the cookstove, a freestanding, fully enclosed cast-iron hearth that soon made fireplace cooking, which consumed large amounts of wood and allowed most of the fire’s heat to escape through the chimney, a thing of the past. Cookstoves had their detractors at first: some saw the demise of the open hearth as a threat to family unity, while others claimed that the stoves (which were at first comparatively tiny) were likely to steam food instead of roasting it, sacrificing flame-kissed flavor in the process. But by the late 19th century, the cookstove was a common sight in American homes and

RECIPE

Roasted Herbed Chicken and Vegetables

SERVES 4

This one-dish meal of chicken and vegetables (facing page) is flavored with lemon peel, garlic, fresh thyme, and butter that’s been infused with herbes de provence, a mix of lavender, rosemary, fennel seed, and savory.

- 4 tbsp. butter
- 1½ tbsp. dried herbes de provence
- 1 tbsp. honey
- 2 cups white wine
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp. fennel seeds
- 12 cloves garlic, unpeeled (8 whole, 4 crushed)
- 3 medium turnips, cut into 2" pieces
- 1 small butternut squash (about 1½ lbs.), peeled, seeded, and cut into thick half moons
- Kosher salt and coarsely ground pepper, to taste
- 1 4-lb. chicken, wings tucked under body
- 1 lemon
- 1 bunch thyme
- 1 large yellow onion, cut into thick wedges
- ¾ lb. brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
- ¾ lb. cremini mushrooms, left whole
- 12 large sage leaves

1. Heat oven to 375°. Melt butter and herbes de provence in a pot over medium heat. Remove from heat; whisk in honey. Cover; let herb butter steep for 20 minutes. Combine wine, half the oil, fennel, whole garlic, turnips, squash, and salt and pepper in a bowl; set turnip mixture aside.

2. Season chicken with salt and pepper. Peel rind from lemon in strips. Halve lemon; set aside. Put rind into cavity with remaining garlic and thyme. Tie legs with twine; set chicken on a small roasting rack (see page 95) in a roasting pan. Arrange turnip mixture around chicken; scatter with onions. Brush chicken with some herb butter. Roast, basting chicken with herb butter and vegetables with pan juices, until turnips are just tender, about 1 hour.

3. Toss brussels sprouts, mushrooms, and sage together in a bowl with remaining oil and salt and pepper; transfer to pan. Continue roasting until a thermometer inserted in chicken’s thigh registers 165°, 25–30 minutes. Transfer chicken to a platter; cover loosely with foil. Return vegetables to oven; roast until very tender, 18–20 minutes. Carve chicken (following steps shown at left), squeeze reserved lemon over top and serve with vegetables.



Carving Prime Rib



1 Using a carving knife, cut a thin slice off one side of the rib roast to create an even base. Place the roast on a large carving platter, cut side down, with the bones to your left.



2 Steady the roast by pressing the carving fork firmly against the topmost bone. Using smooth, even strokes, make a horizontal cut toward the bone to make a thick slice.



3 While continuing to hold the roast steady with the fork, make a smooth, downward cut as close to the bone as possible to separate the slice from the rest of the roast.



4 Using the knife and carving fork, transfer the slice to a warmed serving platter. Repeat preceding steps until you've worked your way to the bottom of the roast.

During the postwar restaurant boom, *the epitome of fine dining* was a fat-rimmed prime rib, carved tableside by a tuxedoed waiter

foreshadowed the era of oven roasting.

Still, the advent of the cookstove gave rise to some confusion over what exactly constituted roasting. Many American cooks and gastronomists in the late 19th century continued to insist that roasting required an open fire, and eventually the term *baking* came into wide use to denote the cooking of savory foods without added moisture in an enclosed oven. In *The American Kitchen Directory and Housewife*, a book of recipes and kitchen tips published in the United States in 1867, the author, Ann Howe, writes, "Meat is better roasted than baked; but in these days of cooking stoves, the latter mode of cooking is generally the most convenient."

Indeed, the ease of using a cookstove soon won out, and most home cooks began employing the terms *roasting* and *baking* interchangeably to refer to virtually the same technique, though some quirky distinctions have persisted. For instance, in *The Appledore Cook Book*, written by Maria Parloa and published in 1872, beef, lamb, pork, veal, and whole fowl cooked in an oven are said to be "roasted," while fish, ham, and vegetables are "baked"; an essentially arbitrary distinction is thus made that many cooks observe to this day. Some chefs suggest that roasting requires the presence of fat or some form of basting or that it is done at a higher temperature than baking is. In the end, the difference remains a semantic one, though if you announced to my father that you loved his baked beef, you'd get funny looks all around.

IMPRESSIVE ROASTS LIKE THE ONE my father makes had their heyday in this country during the years of prosperity following World War II, when an unprecedented number of consumers could afford prime meat and efficient electric and gas ovens became fixtures in the vast majority of American kitchens. Chefs quickly caught on; during the postwar restaurant boom, the epitome of fine dining was a fat-rimmed prime rib carved by a tuxedoed waiter from a tableside warming trolley. In the 1970s and '80s, as meatcentric meals of Fred Flintstone proportions gave way to ostensibly more healthful if slightly less primally satisfying fare, *roasting* became a buzzword among chefs, particularly as it related to ingredients, like vegetables and fish, that had traditionally been boiled or steamed. As a bewildering array of high-powered ovens and high-tech ranges was introduced to home cooks at the beginning of

the new millennium, roasting became so trendy that the New York restaurateur Danny Meyer was cited, in Tom Colicchio's 2000 book *Think Like a Chef* (Clarkson Potter), as saying that the best way to get people to try something new is to let them know that it is roasted.

In the opinion of many cooks, it was time for roasting to return to its roots. The cookbook

RECIPE

Prime Rib

SERVES 8-10

Nowadays, most meat markets sell standing beef rib roasts whose smaller connective bones—called the chine bone and the feather bones—have already been removed (the chine is often tied back on to protect the meat from the oven's intense heat), which makes the meat easier to carve and produces a more handsome roast. Some markets will even slice the meat off the rib bones and then tie them back on; we found that the roast (facing page) came out juicier when the bones were left attached. Either way, be sure the roast is tied at intervals between the rib bones; otherwise the flavorful crust may peel away from the meat during roasting.

- 1** 5-bone beef standing rib roast (10-12 lbs.), chine bone removed and tied back on
- 2** tbsp. kosher salt
- 1½** tbsp. dry mustard, preferably Colman's (see page 95)
- 1½** tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary leaves
- Coarsely ground black pepper, to taste

1. Season beef with salt, including the rack of bones. Rub mustard all over beef; sprinkle with rosemary and pepper. Set the beef in a 12" x 14" roasting pan. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 2-3 days.

2. Remove beef from refrigerator 3 hours before you are ready to roast it, to allow it to come to room temperature. Arrange rack in lower third of oven and heat to 450°. Roast the beef, rib side up, until it begins to brown and sizzle, 20-25 minutes. Reduce temperature to 325°; continue roasting until a meat thermometer inserted in the thickest part of the meat registers 120° (for medium rare), about 2 hours more. Transfer roast to a carving board and reserve any pan juices. Cover loosely with foil and let rest for 25-30 minutes. Remove and discard chine bone. Carve roast (following steps shown at left) and serve with reserved pan juices.

Roasting involves a delicate balancing act of *caramelizing the outside of the meat* while preserving its inner succulence

author Barbara Kafka anticipated this change in 1995, when her landmark book *Roasting: A Simple Art* (William Morrow) was published. A hallmark of the straightforward recipes in Kafka's book is an adherence to high heat (many of the recipes call for an oven temperature of 475 to 500 degrees), a characteristic that harks back to the days of open-hearth roasting, when an extremely hot fire cooked

food quickly, yielding a well-browned outer surface and juicy flesh inside. For me, those two cardinal traits—a crisp outside, a succulent interior—are at the heart of the elemental appeal of roasting. I enjoy the delicate balancing act inherent in the technique, in which direct heat causes proteins and sugars to brown and caramelize on the food's surface (in a process known as the Maillard reaction), while the inside is kept tender and moist. The result is the complex, toasty flavors that make roasted foods so irresistible.

There are several approaches to roasting a big, gorgeous specimen of meat, fowl, or fish. Some cooks prefer to keep the oven at very high heat for the duration of the roasting process in order to achieve a crisp, caramelized exterior and moist flesh. This method works the best when you're dealing with a modest-size roast that has relatively lean or tender flesh, such as a whole fish or a chicken. More-formidable roasts, like a leg of lamb, usually benefit from a two-step approach: a blast of high heat followed by a period of cooking at a more moderate temperature. This ensures a good sear but prevents the outside from burning before the interior has reached the proper level of doneness. Finally, there's the slow-roast method, whereby the oven is kept at a relatively moderate or low temperature for the duration of cooking. With less tender cuts like veal breast or pork shoulder, which require gentle coaxing to reach the perfect stage of succulence, this is the way to go.

After years of experimentation, my father now sticks to the trusty two-step process when preparing his holiday prime rib, cooking the meat at 450 degrees for about 20 minutes, until the fat on top is beginning to sizzle and brown, and then reducing the heat to 325. He roasts the beef for about three more hours, or until "it looks pretty good". In the spirit of his roasting ancestors, he never uses a meat thermometer. I surmise that, given a spit and a roaring wood fire, he'd get results that were just as tasty. 

SAVEUR.COM: *Recipes for veal breast and leg of lamb with potato-fennel gratin, plus how to flavor a holiday roast.*

IN THE SAVEUR KITCHEN, *page 94: An improvised roasting rack, Colman's mustard, and the history of carving.*

RECIPE

Striped Bass with Salsa Verde

SERVES 4

Roasting a whole fish (facing page) on a bed of celery ribs allows the heat to circulate freely underneath the fish and also prevents the skin from sticking to the pan.

- 1 lemon
- 1 whole cleaned striped bass (about 2 lbs.)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves, stems reserved
- 2 tbsp. chopped tarragon leaves, stems reserved
- 3 inner ribs celery, halved crosswise
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped celery leaves
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup capers, rinsed and chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup crème fraîche
- 4 tsp. dijon mustard
- 6 scallions, white and light green parts only, thinly sliced
- Large pinch of crushed red chiles

1. Heat oven to 400°. Grate zest from lemon into a bowl. Halve lemon lengthwise. Squeeze juice from 1 half over zest; cut remaining half into thin half moons; set aside. Cut 2 angled crosswise slits on each side of fish, about halfway to bone and 2" apart. Rub fish with 2 tbsp. oil; season it inside and out with salt and pepper. Place 1 lemon slice in each slit; put remaining slices into belly cavity with reserved stems of parsley and tarragon.

2. Grease a baking sheet with 1 tbsp. oil; arrange celery ribs on top to make a rack for fish. Drizzle with 2 tbsp. oil; top with fish. Roast until cooked, 20–25 minutes. Meanwhile, mix together reserved zest and juice, remaining oil, parsley, tarragon, celery leaves, capers, crème fraîche, mustard, scallions, chile flakes, and salt and pepper in a bowl to make salsa verde. Carve fish (following the steps seen at right). Serve with salsa verde on the side.

Carving Whole Fish



1 Place the fish on a platter with the belly toward you. Using a fish knife and a fork, loosen the skin behind the gill and carefully remove it by lifting it back toward the tail.



2 Using the fish knife, make a lengthwise cut along the center line of the flesh. Then make a second, crosswise cut in the middle of the fish to make four quarter filets.



3 Run the knife under the filets to separate them from the bone. Working with one piece at a time, gently push each quarter filet off the bone and transfer it to an individual serving plate.



4 Gripping the fish's tail, gently lift the backbone up and away from the bottom half of the fish. Set aside head and backbone on serving platter and repeat preceding steps.



IN THE SAVEUR

KITCHEN

Discoveries, Tales, and Techniques from Our Favorite Room in the House • Edited by Todd Coleman

Bundle of Flavors

IT LOOKS AS IF IT'D BE AT HOME pinned to a lapel, but the small bundle of herbs known as a bouquet garni (the name literally means garnished bouquet) makes a big difference when it comes to flavoring many soups and long-cooked dishes, including the lobster bisque on page 30, the French onion soup on page 40, and the braised duck legs on page 52. Usually a combination of parsley, thyme, and bay leaves tied together with kitchen twine (some cooks tuck the herbs into the groove of a rib of celery or a leek before tying), the bouquet garni, which was first documented in French cooking in the 17th century, can be added to a pot and then left alone to infuse a dish with its essences as the dish cooks. For my bouquets garnis, I tend to stick to a formula of six sprigs of flat-leaf parsley, six sprigs of thyme, and two small bay leaves; the parsley lends herbaceous flavors to the dish I'm cooking, while the thyme and bay leaves add an earthy depth. Sometimes I vary the herbs: I often add dill for fish-based dishes, rosemary for ones made with lamb, and tarragon for chicken. The celebrated gastronome Richard Olney, in his book *Simple French Food* (Atheneum, 1974), mentions that he added lovage, which can impart celerylike notes, to his bouquet garni when making hearty dishes like pot-au-feu. Many Italian cooks, who call their bouquet garni mazzetto odoroso ("a little fragrant bundle"), favor a trio of rosemary, sage, and marjoram. Whatever the choice of herbs, the simple utility of bouquets garnis is undeniable. —Katherine Alford

THIS PAGE: ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI; FACING PAGE FROM LEFT: PENNY DE LOS SANTOS, ANDRÉ BARANOWSKI (2)



Red Bliss

Palm oil is the world's most abundant vegetable oil, but not all versions are created equal. The kind used in many processed foods, which comes from the seeds, or kernels, of the fruit of the African oil palm tree (*Elaeis guineensis*), is clear and relatively bland tasting. It's a far cry from the reddish, silky, nutty-tasting oil (below) that's extracted from the flesh of the African oil palm's fruit. Dendê oil, as the latter variety is known in Brazil, is the lifeblood of the cuisine of Bahia, a coastal state of that country (see "Food of the Gods", page 72), where African palms were introduced in the 16th century. In Bahia, dendê oil is used for many purposes, from enriching stews to frying crisp black-eyed pea fritters. It is lower in saturated fat than palm kernel oil, which means that it won't solidify at room temperature and will stand up to high heat, and it contains high levels of carotenes and other antioxidants. Dendê oil is widely available in Brazil, and a good portion of that country's supply is made near Salvador, Bahia's capital city. Various methods are used for making the oil. Some producers dry the harvested palm fruit and then smash it to expose the flesh, which is baked and then pulverized between grinding stones to separate the oily pulp from the kernels. The pulp is left to sit so that the oil may separate from it; then the oil is drawn off, boiled, and bottled. Look for it at Brazilian, Caribbean, and African markets in the United States. (See page 100 for a source.) —Maricel E. Presilla



Foiled

A roasting rack is indispensable for cooking dishes like the roast chicken on page 89. But if, when it comes time to put heat to the meat, you discover that you don't have one, or if the rack you have doesn't fit the pan you're using, don't despair. Just take a few feet of aluminum foil and, working with the foil lengthwise, scrunch it into a solid, one-inch-thick rope that can be bent into a spiral or an S shape to support the bird's weight comfortably while raising it off the bottom of the roasting pan, allowing every part of the skin to brown. —Georgia Freedman

Canned Heat

The concentrated kick of Colman's mustard powder is an essential component of many classic dishes—especially creamy or cheesy ones, like welsh rabbit—and it makes an excellent rub for roasts like the prime rib shown on page 91. Some cooks also use it to make their own spreadable mustard by adding cold water, which activates allyl isothiocyanate, the mustard's fiery chemical compound; jarred versions contain an acid (usually vinegar), which stabilizes it. An English housewife is said to have discovered the trick of milling mustard seeds into a powder in 1720, but it wasn't until 1814 that the powder began to be produced on a large scale. That was the year when miller Jeremiah Colman, who lived in Norwich, England, found a way to crush the seeds without generating heat, which saps the seeds'

volatile oils of their pungency. Today the English company that bears Colman's name is the leading producer of powdered mustard worldwide. The process hasn't changed much in two centuries: brown and white mustard seeds are crushed between rollers and then sifted and blended together. Nowadays a can of Colman's is a pantry staple in England. When I asked Nicky Perry, the proprietor of the Tea & Sympathy café, a Brit hang-out in New York City, whether she uses it, she replied, "I don't know of any other mustard. It's in every British person's larder; it's part of our culture. Bit like tea, isn't it?" —Beth Kracklauer



The Carver's Art

THE MAJESTY OF a perfectly cooked roast (see “King of the Feast”, page 85) all but demands a deftly wielded knife and a sense of ceremony—two things that are too often lacking at many dinner tables these days. Fortunately, many home cooks are eager to become reacquainted with the largely neglected art of tableside carving. They would do well to look to our European forebears. An accomplished nobleman in, say, England, France, Italy, or Germany during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance considered it part of his duty as a gentleman to know how to carve a roast in front of his dinner guests. The carving itself was a spectacle in which accuracy and speed were closely observed and judged. Woe to the cook who failed to display an intimate knowledge of the anatomy of the beast set before him, or who lost too much of the roast's juices by hacking!

Today, carving entails little more than serving evenly proportioned slices, which diners are left to cut into bite-size pieces with their own knives and forks. But early carvers had to present each guest with small, carefully cut bits that could be picked up easily with a knife tip or the fingers, since forks were not widely used until the late 18th century. Variations in the tools of the trade developed over the years. (Pictured at right is a 1960s-era carving set manufactured in Sheffield, England.) In the 16th and 17th centuries, two styles of carving knife were commonly used. One featured a sharp, curved blade that could be inserted between joints and ribs to sever them; another had a straight, parallel-sided blade more suited to slicing. In England, where the rituals of carving have been clung to with particular fervor over the centuries, a two-tined carving fork was usually used for holding the meat in place, but the actual serving of the carved pieces was traditionally accomplished with a knife: a cook either pierced the carved meat with the point of the blade or slid it onto the diner's plate by means of a broad-bladed tool known as a *présentoir*.

Carving was commonly considered to be a man's job until at least the 16th century, when it was finally deemed appropriate for the lady of the house to do the honors. Three centuries later, however, new fashions intruded on tradition; service à la russe—carving and portioning the meat in the kitchen, out of the sight of diners—caught on quickly, presaging the demise of carving as a widely practiced craft. By the mid-20th century, informality at the table had become the rule, and tableside carving was largely relegated to the hands of restaurant professionals. I say it's time to grip fork and blade and reclaim this distinguished art. —Darra Goldstein

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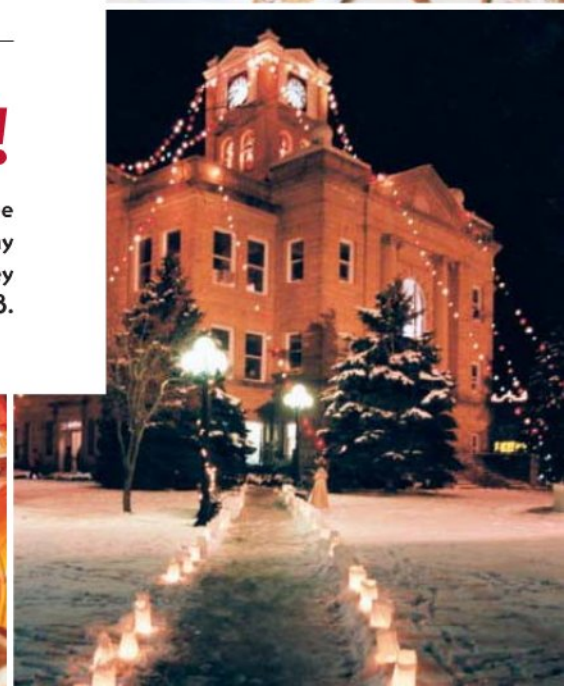
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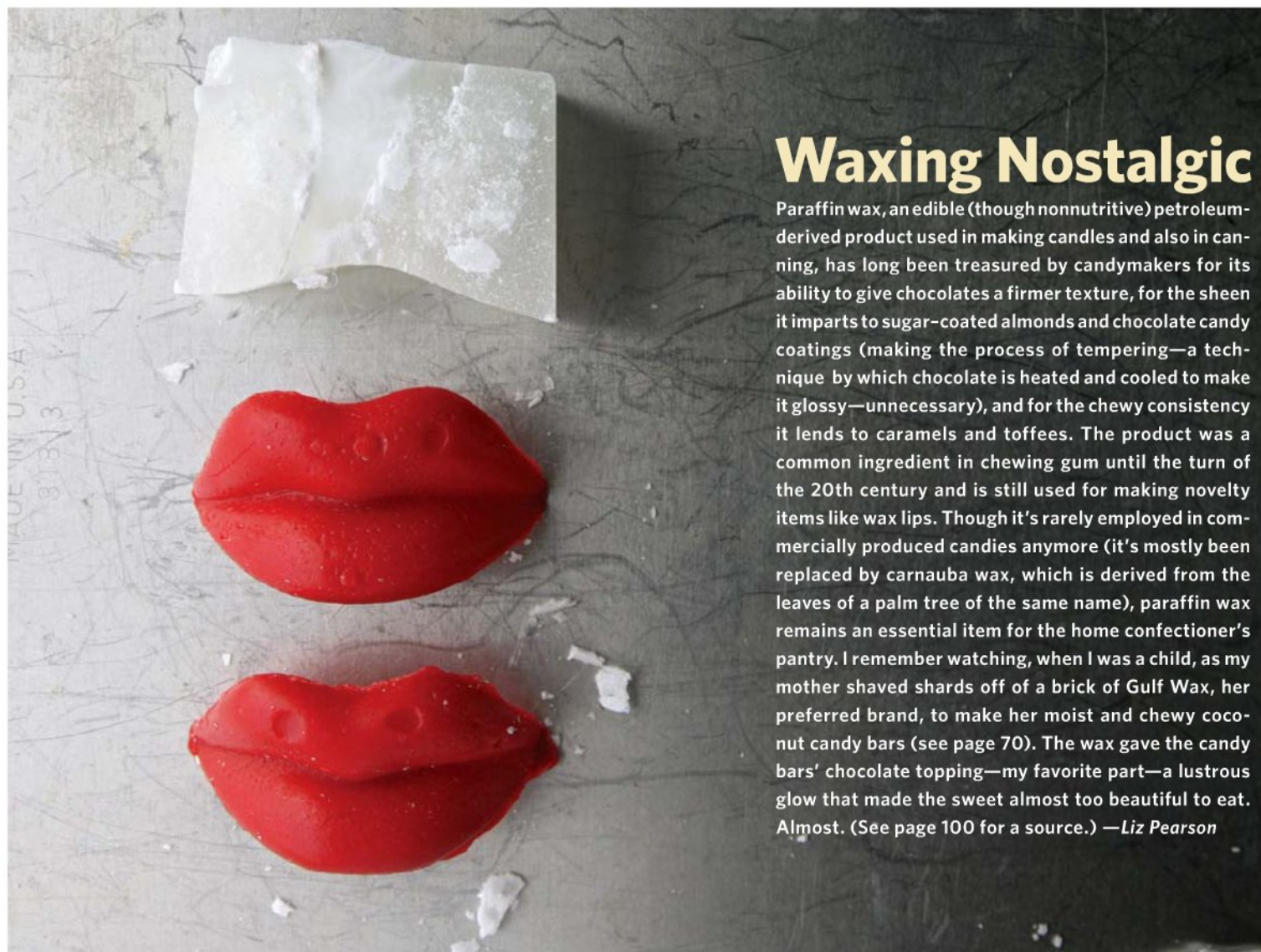


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KITCHEN



Waxing Nostalgic

Paraffin wax, an edible (though nonnutritive) petroleum-derived product used in making candles and also in canning, has long been treasured by candymakers for its ability to give chocolates a firmer texture, for the sheen it imparts to sugar-coated almonds and chocolate candy coatings (making the process of tempering—a technique by which chocolate is heated and cooled to make it glossy—unnecessary), and for the chewy consistency it lends to caramels and toffees. The product was a common ingredient in chewing gum until the turn of the 20th century and is still used for making novelty items like wax lips. Though it's rarely employed in commercially produced candies anymore (it's mostly been replaced by carnauba wax, which is derived from the leaves of a palm tree of the same name), paraffin wax remains an essential item for the home confectioner's pantry. I remember watching, when I was a child, as my mother shaved shards off of a brick of Gulf Wax, her preferred brand, to make her moist and chewy coconut candy bars (see page 70). The wax gave the candy bars' chocolate topping—my favorite part—a lustrous glow that made the sweet almost too beautiful to eat. Almost. (See page 100 for a source.) —Liz Pearson

WINE AND DRINK SUGGESTIONS INSPIRED BY THE FOODS IN THIS ISSUE

REGAL HOLIDAY ROASTS like the ones to which writer Molly Stevens pays tribute in her feature "King of the Feast" (page 85) call for noble wines with considerable character and depth. The best way to find ones that exhibit those qualities but are also affordable—after all, you'll likely be serving more than two or three people—is to seek out bottles from up-and-coming wine-growing regions that haven't yet developed the cachet of the long-established strongholds in France, Italy, and California. To find good pairings for the dishes described in Stevens's story, I turned to the Southern Hemisphere.

The striped bass with salsa verde on page 92 calls for a white wine with an herbal edge. I knew that a full-flavored sauvignon blanc would do the trick, and I found a beautiful expression of that varietal in the **Santa Rita Sauvignon Blanc Reserve 2007** (\$13), from Chile's Casablanca Valley. The roasted herbed chicken and vegetables on page 89 demanded a wine with a comparable fla-

vor profile but a fuller body. A weightier but still vibrant sauvignon-semillon blend, like the **Cape Mentelle Sauvignon Blanc/Semillon 2006** (\$16), from the Margaret River in Western Australia, proved to be an ideal choice.



Many versions of roast pork pair well with a light red such as pinot noir, but the crisp roast pork on page 86, with its robust, garlicky flavors, requires a more firmly structured and full-flavored wine. A peppery syrah such as the **Glen Carlou Syrah 2005** (\$25), from the Paarl region of South Africa, fits the bill.

Finally, for a lordly roast like the prime rib on page 91, you'll want a wine of even greater intensity and richness. I found exactly that in the **Terrazas de los Andes Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 2004** (\$18), from Argentina, which gracefully complemented every bite of that magnificent centerpiece dish. (See page 100 for sources.) —Paul Lukacs, Wine Editor

KITCHEN

RECIPES & METHODS
BY CATEGORY

APPETIZERS AND HORS D'OEUVRES

Gratinéed Oysters with Sauerkraut.....55

Guatemalan Tamales with

Ancho Chile Sauce.....16

Potato Pancakes.....47

SOUPS

French Onion Soup 40

Lobster Bisque 30

MAIN DISHES

Meat and Poultry

Braised Beef Stew with Okra and Smoked

Sausage..... 77

Braised Duck Legs with Rutabagas52

Crisp Roast Pork..... 86

Prime Rib91

Roasted Herbed Chicken and Vegetables89

Seafood

Fish Stew with Coconut Milk75

Striped Bass with Salsa Verde92

SIDE DISHES

Black-Eyed Pea Salad82

Braised Red Cabbage with Bacon.....58

Potato Pancakes.....47

DESSERTS

Coconut Candy Bars70

Lollipops.....70

Pecan Toffee 66

Peppermint Patties.....69

Sweet Red Wine Jelly with Whipped Cream..... 60

MISCELLANEOUS

Bahian Salsa 80

Cachaça-Lime Cocktail83

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THE PANTRY

A Guide to Resources

*In producing the stories for this issue,
we discovered food products and
kitchenware too good to keep to ourselves.
Please feel free to raid our pantry!*

BY LIZ PEARSON

Fare

To make Guatemalan tamales with ancho chile sauce, purchase frozen **bananaleaves** (\$4.99 for a 1-pound package) from Kalustyan's (800/352-3451; www.kalustyans.com), which also sells **achiote paste** (\$6.99 for an 8-ounce package), **masa flour** (\$2.49 for a 1-pound bag; ask for "masa harina"), and **rice flour** (\$2.49 for a 1-pound bag) for making the same dish. In Paris, stock up on Iranian **saffron** at Goumanyat & Son Royaume (3 rue Charles-Francois Dupuis; 33/144 789 674; www.goumanyat.com). Owner Jean Marie Thiercelin doesn't ship to the United States, but purchase excellent pushal- and sargol-style saffron at Vanilla, Saffron Imports (415/648-8990; www.saffron.com). In Spain, visit Turronería Jijona (avenida Valencia, Puçol; 34/96-142-0429), which makes its own **turrón** in the fall and sells it until supplies run out. In the U.S., La Tienda (800/710-4304; www.tienda.com) ships an array of turrón treats. Contact the company directly for prices and availability.

Cellar

For the vintage **champagnes** listed in our tasting notes, contact Maisons Marques & Domaines USA (510/587-2000) for the Louis Roederer; Remy Cointreau, USA (212/424-2244) for the Charles Heidsieck; Terlato Wines International (847/604-8900) for the Bollinger; USA Wine Imports (212/941-7133) for the Henriot; Vranken-Pommery America (212/921-1215) for the Pommery; Kobrand Corporation (914/253-7700) for the Taittinger; Palm Bay International (561/362-9642) for the Gosset; Maisons Marques & Domaines

USA (510/587-2000) for the Deutz; Ex Cellars Wine Agencies (617/876-5105) for the Philipponnat; and Sherry-Lehmann (212/838-7500) for the Moët et Chandon.

Kitchenwise

Jeanne-Marie Herman and Michael Ableman welcome visitors year-round at their farm on Saltspring Island. In addition to offering overnight accommodations on Foxglove Farm, they run programs focused on art and ecology and multiday educational courses on organic farming and watershed conservation. For details, call 250/537-1989.

Berlin

During the holidays, Berlin is brimming with opportunities for eating, drinking, and shopping your way around town. In addition to those in the Guide (see page 60), here are a few of author Ursula Heinzlmann's favorite spots for doing just that: **Café Buchwald** (Bartningallee 29; 49/30-391-5931), a pastry shop and café founded in 1852 that specializes in handcrafted traditional cakes; **Goldhahn & Sampson** (Dunckerstraße 9; 49/30-411-98366), a retro deli with a selection of cookbooks and tempting food from around the world; **Königliche Porzellan-Manufaktur Berlin** (Wegelystraße 1; 49/30-39-0090; www.kpm-berlin.de), the factory and gallery of the venerable Royal Prussian Porcelain Manufactory; **Königsberger Marzipan Paul Wald** (Pestalozzistraße 54a; 49/30-323-8254), a shop, specializing in mouthwatering marzipan, that is lovingly run by Gina Massey, who inherited the business from her grandparents; **Lebensmittel in Mitte** (Rochstraße 2; 49/30-275-96130), a shop not far from Hackescher Markt where you'll find kässpätzle, a south German version of macaroni and cheese, and a well-chosen selection of German wines, breads, and pretzels; and **In't Veld Schokoladen and Cafe Kakao** (Dunckerstraße 10; 49/30-417-22281; www.intveld.de), former music journalist Holger in't Veld's chocolate shop, where the candied ginger and hot chocolate reign supreme. To make the red wine jelly, purchase 3-gram **gelatin sheets** (\$3.99 for a package of 9) from New York Cake and Baking (800/942-2539; www.nycake.com).

Texas Sweets

For making peppermint patties, look for a less expensive **marble slab** at antiques stores, or purchase one (\$129.00 for a 24-by-16-inch slab) from Williams-Sonoma (877/812-6235; www.williamssonoma.com). New York Cake and Baking (800/942-2539; www.nycake.com) sells **flavored oils** (\$2.99–\$13.99) and 4-inch-long **lollipop sticks** (\$2.99 for a bag of 50) for making the lollipops. The store also sells the **paraffin wax** (\$8.99 for a 1-pound block) you'll need for making the coconut candy bars.

Bahia

Rio Bonito (718/728-4300; www.riobonito.market.com) sells all manner of foods from Brazil, including **dendê oil** (\$4.09 for a half-liter bottle), for making the fish stew with coconut milk, and Brazilian-style **dried beef** (\$5.99 per pound; ask for "carne seca"), for making the braised beef stew with okra and smoked sausage. It also sells toasted **yuca flour** (\$2.09 for a 2.2-pound bag; ask for "farinha de mandioca branca") for making both dishes. To make the black-eyed pea salad, buy unpeeled **dried shrimp** (\$2.50 for a 1³/₄-ounce package) from LatinMerchant.com (206/223-9374; www.latinmerchant.com).

Kitchen

To purchase **dendê oil**, see Bahia (above). See Texas Sweets (above) for details on ordering **paraffin wax**. For **wines** listed in "What to Pour", contact the following: Palm Bay International (561/362-9642) for the Santa Rita Sauvignon Blanc Reserve; Sherry-Lehmann (212/838-7500) for the Cape Mentelle Sauvignon Blanc/Semillon; Hess Group (707/255-1144) for the Glen Carlou Syrah; and Sam's Wines & Spirits (800/777-9137) for the Terrazas de los Andes Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve.

Correction

In our November 2007 issue, the recipe for chicken and dumplings on page 16 should have called for 5¹/₂ tbsp. melted butter.

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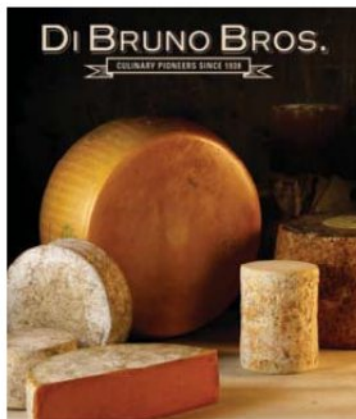
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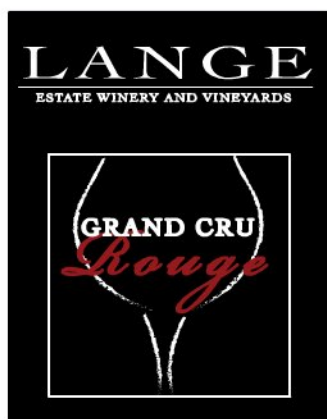
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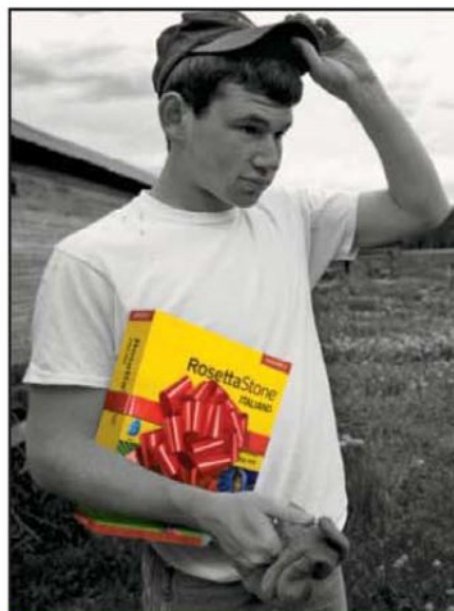
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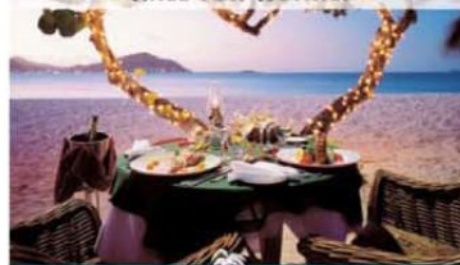
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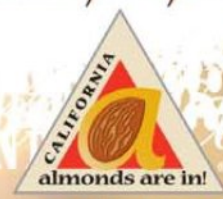
*Santas from the Volunteers of America test-drive
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